

## Weekend decision on Mr Stonehouse's future in Australia

A decision on Mr John Stonehouse's request to stay in Australia will be made today or tomorrow, the Australian Minister for Immigration said in Melbourne yesterday. The Labour MP disappeared from Miami last month. Yesterday his secretary

said in London that she knew some of the people Mr Stonehouse was probably thinking of when he claimed that he was the victim of blackmail and smear campaigns which had led to a "brainstorm" and his desire to assume a new identity.

### 'Even chance' of his staying

From Our Correspondent Melbourne, Dec 27

Mr Clyde Cameron, the Australian Minister for Immigration, said here today that he would give a decision within the next 48 hours on the future in Australia of Mr John Stonehouse, the British Labour MP. He said there was an "even chance" that Mr Stonehouse would be permitted to remain, if he wished to do so, provided he could prove he was a member of the House of Commons. As such he would be exempt from any part of the Immigration Act requiring him to have an entry permit. As a British Labour MP he would be welcomed by the Australian Government.

Mr Cameron said that as far as he was aware Mr Stonehouse had not committed any offence in Australia. Mr Stonehouse remained today at the Commonwealth detention centre in a Melbourne suburb, where he was visited by his wife.

Mr J. A. Patterson, his lawyer in Melbourne, told reporters he had been in touch with officials of the immigration department and had assured them that his client could be positively identified at once.

He pointed out that the Victorian and the Commonwealth police had positively identified Mr Stonehouse and he had not denied his identity. Mr Patterson said that if Mr Stonehouse was released he would probably find a place to live in Australia. His wife would join him.

Staff Reporters write: Mr James Charlton, the man who last saw Mr Stonehouse at the Wallallah, North, ten minutes before he disappeared from a Miami beach on November 20, is expected to break his silence in

a statement that could unravel the final threads of the mystery.

A business associate of the man who is acting chairman of London Capital Securities in Mr Stonehouse's absence said yesterday that Mr Charlton would be producing the statement soon. It could shed light on the mysterious figure who wrote to Mr Stonehouse in Australia during the MP's four-week disappearance.

Mr Charlton, a barrister, who is expected to assume the chairmanship of London Capital Securities, stayed at a secret address with friends during Christmas after ordering his staff to keep silent on the affair. An associate said yesterday: "He remains totally unper-

turbed by the affair and is choosing his time to speak."

Mr Charlton has not spoken to police since Mr Stonehouse, aged 49, was arrested in Australia.

Police in Britain are keeping a watching brief on the situation in Australia before making inquiries in Britain. They will then be investigating Mr Stonehouse's claims that he was being blackmailed in Britain and that this led to the "brainstorm" which forced him to disappear while in Miami on business with Mr Charlton.

Mr William Molloy, Labour MP for Ealing, North, and a former parliamentary private secretary of Mr Stonehouse, called yesterday for an investigation of the allegations by Mr Stonehouse, which have amazed the business associates of the former minister. One theory is that Mr Stonehouse has exaggerated what are largely business pressures.

Mrs Sheila Buckley, his secretary, however, insists that he was being blackmailed and that that and smear campaigns led to his urge to start a new life in Australia.

Mrs Buckley, who is 28, said Mr Stonehouse had been under great pressure, and added: "He looked considerably older. He was obviously suffering a great deal."

She would not say whether the alleged blackmail was in fact business pressures, but added: "He spoke of blackmail and I merely confirmed that this was the case."

Mrs Buckley, who was speaking at her parents' home in Abbey Wood, South-east London, said that she had not been seen by the police, but she would be happy to talk to them.

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## Rail fares to rise 12½p next month

By a Staff Reporter

British Rail fares will go up by an average of 12½ per cent on January 26, barely seven months after a similar increase last summer. A further increase is likely within a few months to contain the railways' mounting deficit.

The first increase had been widely expected and only its timing was a doubt. In spite of a 12 per cent rise in fares and freight charges in June, which yielded £70m extra, British Rail still expects to end this year with a deficit of about £150m.

The January fare increases are expected to raise income by £100m. The three railway unions are too about to lodge a protest against the further fare increase before summer is thus almost inevitable.

In London and the South-east, some fares for shorter journeys will be increased by a smaller amount or left at present levels until London Transport fares go up in March.

Most other rail fares, season tickets, ordinary, day and weekend returns will go up by 12½ per cent and some Inter-City single fares by 15 per cent. Return and 17-day returns will also go up by 15 per cent.

A day-return fare from London to Brighton will go up from £1.75 to £1.8; from London to Bishop's Cleeve from 90p to £1.0; and from London to Guildford from £1.0 to £1.1. A quarterly season ticket from London to Brighton will be increased from £70.20 to £79 and from London to Guildford from £54 to £60.8.

Under the new increases the ordinary return fare from London to Aberdeen will rise from £21.07 to £23.73; from London to Glasgow or Edinburgh from £17.08 to £19.24; from London to Newcastle upon Tyne from £13.40 to £15.09; and from London to Liverpool or Manchester from £10.23 to £11.53.

Many other rail charges will also be raised. Parcel rates will go up by an average of 12½ per cent tomorrow. Sleeper berths will be increased from £3.60 to £ (first class) and from £2.40 to £2.70 (second class), from January 26.

Platform tickets will be doubled to 4p and 2p will be charged for the use of station lavatories, car parking and luggage in advance charges will also be raised. The Price Commission is considering a separate application for an increase in rail catering charges.

The increase in the size of ships for any improvement in services. No new routing stock and only minimal improvements to stations are planned. On the other hand, the admission of Mr Richard Marsh, chairman of the railways board, passengers are already travelling in conditions unfit for cattle.

Outside the South-east, rail travellers can look forward to a new type of high-speed train which will start running between Paddington and Bristol and South Wales. Fifty-nine high-speed trains are being built for the Western region and for main-line services to Yorkshire, North-east and eastern Scotland.

Mr Marsh's criticisms, page 17



Displaced Mrs M. Gatis, one of the thousands of refugees flown out of devastated Darwin, clutches her daughters, aged three and 14 months, as she is about to board a rescue aircraft yesterday.

## Australia takes up challenge of rebuilding ravaged Darwin

From Our Correspondent Melbourne, Dec 27

Dr Cairns, the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, returned to Melbourne today, after a day spent inspecting the devastation in Darwin. Red-eyed and weary, Dr Cairns was emotionally disturbed by what he had seen and heard, and his face showed signs of strain.

He told reporters: "Darwin has been completely devastated. The rebuilding of the city will be the greatest national challenge the Australian people have faced in 30 years. We must not fail."

"Darwin will be rebuilt, but not necessarily on the same site. It will have to be better planned than the destroyed Darwin of 30 years ago. The lines calculated to withstand such a dreadful ordeal in the future. Much thought will have to be given to this aspect of the new city that will arise out of the wreckage of the old one."

Mr Whitlam, the Prime Minister, arrived in Perth late today from London. He will fly to Darwin tomorrow for the day and then go on to Sydney where he has called a meeting of the Cabinet for Monday to discuss measures to cope with the aftermath of the cyclone.

"The Prime Minister today sent the following message to Sir John Kerr, the Governor-General: "Please convey my deepest sympathy to the relatives of all those who lost their lives in the terrible storm in Darwin and to those who are

homeless. My thoughts are with those who are struggling to create some order after what must have been absolute chaos."

The Governor-General has received messages of sympathy from all over the world to pass on to the people of Darwin.

In the stricken city dozens of aircraft have been flying out hundreds of refugees and bringing in much needed supplies.

A British submarine is also expected in tomorrow with special power, lighting and other equipment.

It was announced today that 25 of the 45 people known to have been killed by the cyclone have been identified. Among the dead were three babies and five children. A few of the buildings left standing were damaged by a navigation light, limited air traffic control facilities and lights on the main runway.

Doctors and nurses were today giving residents injections against tetanus, typhoid, smallpox and cholera. With the high humidity and temperatures, disease has become a real threat. Many people have not been able to wash for three days and a hot bath has been out of the question.

Among the supplies flown in today were milk and beer. This will help to relieve the strain of the water shortage until the

water supply is restored.

The Meteorological Office said areas worst affected were the South and South-west. On the coast, there had been 50 mph gusts. On the mainland, the fiercest gust reached 80 mph.

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## £1,000 grant to the Queen for cottages

From Our Correspondent King's Lynn

The Queen is to be given £1,000 from public funds to convert two cottages into one on the 20-acre Sandringham estate. It was disclosed yesterday. West Norfolk District Council is making its first improvement grant to the Queen since it came into being in April under local government reorganization.

The Queen owns 350 cottages at Sandringham, which is a private possession of the Royal Family. In recent years she has carried out extensive modernization of cottages on the estate.

Mr Bryan Beaumont, the council's chief environmental health officer, said yesterday: "We dealt with this application in the same way as we would from any other person. It concerns a couple of old cottages at Apleson. They are in very poor condition and are being converted into one decent dwelling for use by a farm worker."

"Some of the old outbuildings are being knocked down and a certain amount of building is being done. This will provide a sitting room, dining room, kitchen and utility room downstairs and four bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. The total cost of the work is vastly in excess of the grant of £1,000."

The Queen, who is going to Sandringham today for a four-week holiday, will stay in a property which she has modernized for herself. It is the six-bedroom Wood Farm House, at Welford, two miles from Sandringham. The farmhouse was falling into disrepair when the Queen took it over and restored it.

The Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward will stay at Wood Farm because 91 rooms at Sandringham House have been demolished and 18 are being rebuilt to make it more economical. It is believed the scheme, including other repairs, is costing the Queen well over £250,000.

## Mr and Mrs Wilson land in a gale

The Prime Minister, with Mrs Wilson and their younger son, Giles, landed by helicopter at St Mary's, in the Isles of Scilly, in a gale yesterday. They are spending about a week on the islands during the Christmas recess.

The family had travelled to Penzance in a Royal Naval helicopter. Early yesterday the Scillies were lashed by winds of over 75 mph, with thunder, lightning and torrential rain. More damage was caused on Thursday night by heavy rain and wind in most parts of Wales. Roads and chimneys were damaged and many houses were flooded in Cardiff and the Rhondda yesterday. Roads were flooded in South Wales.

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Continued on page 4, col 8

## Gold at record high on London market

Gold rose to record levels in the London bullion market yesterday. The closing price of \$195 3/4 was \$3 up on its last quote, on Christmas Eve. There was a surprising amount of business in view of the closeness to the Christmas holiday. Expectations that there will be considerable speculative interest in the metal when it becomes possible for American citizens to own

## China queries value of US links

Chinese leadership appears to be questioning the value of too much dependence on the West for support in view of the events of the past year, writes David Bonavia.

## Educational ship is withdrawn

Rising operating costs have forced the educational cruise ship Nevada, thus disappointing thousands of schoolchildren booked to sail on board her next year. The group say the decision will mean they will be able to keep running the Uganda, their other educational cruise ship.

## Ceasefire hitch

The Ulster Defence Association, largest of the Protestant paramilitary groups, says it rejected a Provisional IRA offer of peace talks before the ceasefire announcement.

## Rain halts Test

Two hours and 20 minutes of play were lost in the third Test match in Melbourne yesterday because of bad light and rain. Australia have scored 63 for no wicket in reply to England's 242 all out.

## 40 French miners killed by explosion 15 minutes after starting shift

At least 40 coal miners were killed early today by an underground explosion soon after the start of the morning shift down the Lens mine at Liévin, near Bethune, in northern France.

## Freedom of press 'under attack on all fronts'

The freedom of the press is under attack on all fronts, the International Press Institute said in a report in its annual survey.

## Jack Benny dies

Beverly Hills, California, Dec 27.—Jack Benny, the comedian, died last night of stomach cancer. He was 80, though he claimed he was 39 years old right up to the day he died.

## Nine killed in train collision at Lisbon

Lisbon, Dec. 27.—Two trains collided outside Lisbon's main railway station today, killing nine people and injuring 65. One train was slowed down to come into the Santa Apollonia station and the other had just pulled out for the northern town of Coimbra when the accident happened.

## Redesigned £10 note to be released shortly

A redesigned £10 note is to be issued early in the new year. It will be followed later by a slightly altered £1 note. The new notes will complete the changes planned in the late 1960s to cut production costs, make way for the £20 note and introduce new techniques to combat forgers.

## Valuable property will benefit from invaluable advice.

Savills' experience is now more important than ever

## Newsletters in Italy halted

Rome, Dec 27.—Italians will be without newspapers until Monday because of a 48-hour strike begun today over pay.

## £90m oil damage

Tokyo, Dec 27.—The Japanese Government decided today to set up an emergency headquarters to fight an oil slick which has contaminated more than 100 miles of shore along the Inland Sea. The damage to the fishing industry was put at about £90m.—Reuter.

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HOME NEWS

UDA says it rejected peace talks with Provisionals before the Christmas ceasefire

From Stewart Tandler Belfast

The largest of the Protestant paramilitary groups claimed yesterday to have rebuffed a proposal for peace talks sent by the Provisional IRA a few days before the ceasefire was announced.

A senior official of the Ulster Defence Association said that Mr Seamus O'Malley, a high ranking member of the Provisionals' army council, suggested talks with Mr Andy Tyrre, a UDA commander. The approach is said to have been made on December 17 to the UDA's offices in Shankill Road, and suggests that Mr Twomey, a former IRA commander in Belfast, may have been in the city at the time.

The ceasefire began last Sunday at midnight, but was announced on December 20, and Mr Twomey could have been discussing it in Belfast earlier in the week.

The UDA officer said the offer of talks was rejected because the paramilitary groups have agreed among themselves not to confer with the Provisionals, although they have done so on several occasions. The UDA feels that a ceasefire is a matter for the British Government rather than itself. Certainly any "loyalist" group that talked to the Provisionals could expect heavy criticism if the fact was disclosed.

Republican sources said yesterday that an approach might have been made, inspired by suggestions from Protestant church leaders who met the Provisionals and initiated the ceasefire moves. The aim of talks between the IRA and the UDA has been to prevent a fresh outbreak of sectarian killings jeopardizing the ceasefire. It is known that whatever may have happened last week, a message was sent to the loyalist paramilitary groups on the day the ceasefire was announced, calling on them to prevent fresh murders. So far none has been reported.

Mr Twomey possibly also wished to explain the Provisionals' current political thinking to the UDA and explore its views on a longer ceasefire.

Today marks the sixth day of the ceasefire and since Sunday the only report from the Army has been an incident in Londonderry when a patrol was fired on, on Christmas Eve.

The Army's headquarters at Lisburn say it was a quieter Christmas than usual. Republicans say that in some districts of Belfast soldiers have not been in evidence, but in others, more seem to have been on patrol. The Republicans say the only incidents they know of have been two attempts at arrests in Clonard and Andersonstown.

Apart from a dying man found on Boxing Day, the RUC has been engaged in such mundane matters as Christmas car accidents and customers vehemently dissatisfied with a Wombles show. Yesterday the RUC stood guard over the Belfast cinema where the show had appeared after customers demanded their money back and became angry when they were told that was not possible until the banks opened next week.

The show has been scrapped. Mr James Flynn and Mr Noel McComb, who were deported to Northern Ireland last week under the new anti-terrorism Act, have both been released by the RUC. They were held for questioning when they landed. Wombles defended: Mr W. Kenwright, producer of the stage version of *The Wombles of Wimbledon Common*, said yesterday that the Belfast audience, some of whose members ran on to the stage during a Boxing Day performance of the pantomime, had gone to the show prepared to find fault (the Press Association report).

The pantomime is running in regional centres, including Liverpool, where on Monday the show was abandoned after complaints. Normally postal staff who suffered injury in such circumstances would have to apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, or wait the outcome of a lengthy insurance investigation. Staff will still be able to use those channels, but the circular says that the Post Office will make its own awards within the terms of the common law.

The provisions will also benefit postal staff who have retired early as a direct result of criminal injuries. They will get improved pensions if the Post Office considers the case valid.

The new arrangements will apply to all postal staff on Post Office property, or elsewhere on Post Office business and therefore cover letter bombs in a sorting office or bombs in a pillar box. Union leaders are pleased. Their main concern in the past has been the length of time taken to settle normal insurance claims.

Details of the bomb factory were given by Det Chief Supt Cyril Hildaway, head of Hampshire CID. He is heading the hunt for Irish terrorists who fired on police when they were challenged in Southampton on Monday. One officer was wounded in the stomach and pelvis and another escaped when his glasses were shattered by a bullet.

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Post Office staff hurt by bombs to get cash

By Alan Hamilton Labour Staff

The Post Office Corporation has agreed cash compensation terms for postal workers who are injured in bomb explosions while handling mail.

Talks are still going on between postal union leaders and the Post Office Board on a precise scale of cash benefits for death or injury through terrorist activity. But in the meantime postmen have been told that immediate substantial compensation will be paid in the event of death or injury in an explosion.

The new terms are outlined in a circular from Post Office chiefs sent to local branches of the Union of Post Office Workers. Union leaders met the Post Office for urgent talks on compensation the day after a bomb at the London Museum telephone exchange, near Tottenham Court Road, on December 17, killed a postal worker.

Normally postal staff who suffered injury in such circumstances would have to apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, or wait the outcome of a lengthy insurance investigation. Staff will still be able to use those channels, but the circular says that the Post Office will make its own awards within the terms of the common law.

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As the season's good will closed, the sales season opened, as seen in yesterday's scramble for bargains at this Oxford Street shoe shop.

Rising costs force cruise ship's withdrawal

Thousands of schoolchildren booked for educational cruises abroad next year on the P & O ship *Nevasa* will now get their trips. The P & O Group announced today that the *Nevasa*, 20,160 tons, is to be withdrawn from service next week because of unprecedented rises in operating costs. It says the withdrawal may cause a small reduction in staff, but promises to do its best to find them other jobs.

The company's other educational cruise ship, the *Uganda*, is to maintain its programme. Mr John Sharpe, the group's educational cruising manager, blamed the *Nevasa*'s withdrawal on a four-fold increase in the price of fuel oil, and crew, maintenance and support costs, which had risen faster than it had been possible to increase fares.

Teachers are urged to accept pay report

By Tim Devlin Education Correspondent  
Mr Andrew Hutchings, general secretary of the Assistant Masters' Association and chairman of the teachers' panel of the Burnham committee, called yesterday for all teachers' unions to accept the main recommendations of the Houghton report on teachers' pay. The Burnham committee which negotiates teachers' pay, is to meet on January 6 to consider the £400m settlement recommended by Lord Houghton, which would give teachers increases of between 16 and 32 per cent.

Lord Houghton's recommendations have to be approved by the Burnham committee before they can be implemented, although they were underwritten in advance by the Government. There are fears that the teachers' panel, which has a majority of representatives from the National Union of Teachers, may try to get a better deal for younger members of the profession. They were awarded increases of less than 16 per cent and a starting salary for non-graduates of £1,677 plus threshold payments of £229, which was much less than the union wanted. Mr Hutchings said in London yesterday that the settlement advocated by his association, which would have brought them much nearer £2,000 a year.

Boys free after 24 hours trapped in wooden box

Three boys used a nail to escape yesterday from a cramped wooden box in which they had been trapped for 24 hours. Ross Finegan, aged 10, his brother Howard, aged nine, and David Starkie, aged eight, all of Broad Road, Sale, Cheshire, went to play in the box, in a builder's yard, on Boxing Day morning. The wind blew the lid down and the clasp dropped. The boys were forced to long, 2ft wide slit, cut through the lid with a nail to lift the lid enough to breathe.

Mother is refused leave to take daughter overseas

A mother yesterday faced the choice between her husband in Australia and the daughter, aged eight, of her first marriage. Her former husband succeeded in the Court of Appeal in stopping her from taking the child to Australia today. The mother wept in court as she told Lord Justice Stephenson and Lord Justice Ormrod: "I have to go tomorrow. I have no choice. I wish I could stay."

Search for Stonehouse application

By Our Political Staff  
Some of Mr Stonehouse's parliamentary colleagues were wondering yesterday whether he would shortly be applying for the Chiltern Hundreds. For them a swift end to his parliamentary career would be the best conclusion to an embarrassing affair. If he does not apply, moves to expel him are expected when Parliament re-assembles. But there was also some speculation on whether any such request from him would be granted. There would seem to be no reason why not. The constitutional position is that an MP cannot technically resign his seat. He must remain an MP until Parliament is dissolved unless he is expelled, is adjudged a bankrupt or of unsound mind, or takes an office of profit under the Crown.

MP calls for passport loophole to be plugged

An MP yesterday called on the Home Secretary to alter the law on matters of urgency to plug the loophole which enabled Mr Stonehouse to be issued with a passport in the name of a dead man. "The ease with which this can apparently be done is frightening," Mr Peter Rost, Conservative member for Derbyshire, South-east, said. Not only did it enable people to escape from this country into oblivion, "but it is an open invitation for people to run a racket in smuggling false passports out of this country to enable others to enter Britain illegally." He added that he would write to the Home Secretary immediately, and would raise the matter in Parliament after the Christmas recess. He also called for a government investigation into the extent to which the loophole has been exploited by people in recent years.

Scottish pressure for £3m more in final settlement

From Ronald Faux Edinburgh  
Scottish teachers' negotiators will meet management representatives on Monday to resolve a pay dispute which threatens to disrupt Scottish education again in the new year. Mr John Pollock, secretary of the Educational Institute of Scotland, said yesterday that the teachers would do all they could to resolve the dispute. But he warned management that negotiations on recommendations of the Houghton committee were leaving the possibility of a settlement very late. The Houghton committee had recommended £41m, rising to £47m when reconstruction was completed within two years. "We are asking for an additional £3m," he said. "Something in that region would guarantee peace in the schools."

No bar to stewardship of Chiltern Hundreds

By Our Political Staff  
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Widow tells of visitor who 'brought condolences'

From Arthur Osman Birmingham  
More details were disclosed yesterday of the circumstances about the adoption by Mr Stonehouse of the names of dead constituents for his passport entry to Australia. Mrs Elsie Mildoon, a widow, of James Bridge, Staffordshire, commented on the use by the MP of her late husband's name when he was detained in a flat in Melbourne.

Public houses dispute

Some 350 Scottish public houses may close within a week because of a dispute involving Tennent Caledonian Breweries, the National Association of Licensed House Managers and the Transport and General Workers' Union. Managers of Tennent houses have been told by the association to refuse further supplies of draught beer.

Appeal launched for a Reynolds

Lord Kenyon, chairman of the trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, has appealed for donations to help to buy Sir Joshua Reynolds' portrait of Laurence Sterne. The appeal comes after "an encouraging answer" from the Government to a request from the gallery for a £40,000 grant. The portrait was offered by the artist for £50,000 on December 12. Donations may be made to the National Portrait Gallery Trust Fund.

Weather forecast and recordings

Today	Tomorrow
Sun rises: 8.5 am Moon sets: 7.13 am Full Moon: Tomorrow	Sun rises: 3.6 am Moon sets: 8.3 am Full Moon: 3.51 am
Lightning up: 4.28 pm to 7.36 am High water: London Bridge, 12.34 am, 6.7m (22.1ft); 12.56 pm, 6.9m, (22.5ft); Avonmouth, 6.36 am, 12.6m (41.5ft); 6.45 pm, 12.9m (42.3ft); Dover, 10.3 am, 6.3m (20.6ft); 10.30 pm, 6.5m (21.3ft); Hull, 5 am, 6.8m (22.2ft); 5.28 pm, 7.1m (23.3ft); Liverpool, 10.18 am, 8.4m (27.6ft); 10.42 pm, 8.5m (27.9ft).	Lightning up: 4.29 pm to 7.37 am High water: London Bridge, 1.25 am, 7.0m (23.0ft); 1.47 pm, 7.2m (23.6ft); Avonmouth, 7.6 am, 13.5m (44.3ft); 7.34 pm, 13.4m (44.0ft); Dover, 10.46 am, 6.6m (21.5ft); 11.12 pm, 6.7m (22.1ft); Hull, 5.59 am, 7.0m (23.0ft); 6.12 pm, 7.3m (24.1ft); Liverpool, 11.15 am, 8.5m (28.0ft); 11.30 pm, 8.8m (28.9ft).

WEATHER RECORDS YESTERDAY MIDDAY: c, cloud; d, drizzle; f, fair; r, rain; s, sun; sn, snow.			
Aixers 15 50	Cardiff 10 50	L. Palma 19 66	Nice 14 60
Athens 15 47	Cologne 10 48	London 19 65	Norwich 14 58
Birmingham 14 47	Edinburgh 10 43	Lyons 19 65	Osaka 14 58
Bombay 15 47	Exeter 10 43	Madrid 19 65	Paris 14 58
Boston 15 47	Florence 10 43	Manila 19 65	Rome 14 58
Buenos Aires 15 47	Glasgow 10 43	Mexico 19 65	Sydney 14 58
Calcutta 15 47	Hamburg 10 43	Montevideo 19 65	Tokyo 14 58
Canton 15 47	Helsinki 10 43	Perth 19 65	Wellington 14 58
Cebu 15 47	Hong Kong 10 43	Port of Spain 19 65	Yokohama 14 58
Colon 15 47	Kobe 10 43	Rangoon 19 65	
Dacca 15 47	London 10 43	Singapore 19 65	
Dahomey 15 47	Lyons 10 43	Sourabaya 19 65	
Darwin 15 47	Madrid 10 43	Tientsin 19 65	
Delhi 15 47	Manila 10 43	Yokohama 19 65	
Demerara 15 47	Mexico 10 43		
Dombivli 15 47	Montevideo 10 43		
Dublin 15 47	Perth 10 43		
Frankfurt 15 47	Port of Spain 10 43		
Glasgow 15 47	Rangoon 10 43		
Hankow 15 47	Singapore 10 43		
Hong Kong 15 47	Sourabaya 10 43		
Hull 15 47	Tientsin 10 43		
Imbabura 15 47	Yokohama 10 43		
Indrapur 15 47			
Jakarta 15 47			
Jersey 15 47			

Escapers are recaptured 7 miles from hospital

From Our Correspondent Nottingham  
The two men who escaped from Rampton trap security hospital, Nottingham, on Christmas Eve, were recaptured by police yesterday after a 38-hour search by helicopter and on foot. Christopher McAteer and Brian Martin Perkins, both aged 20, were found by a sergeant with a dog hiding in a plate-layers' hut near Saxby, Lincolnshire, seven miles from the hospital. Chief Supt Richard Richardson said police received a tip-off at 7.30 am that two men were trying to break into a car near a railway line near Saxby. They were found after a two-hour search and returned to Rampton for questioning.

Seven rescued after mill fires

A hundred families in the village of Stubbins, near Bury, Lancashire, were evacuated to safety when fire swept through two mills nearby early yesterday. Lancashire police said they suspected arson. The fires were at the Rosebank Mill of Traditional Upholstery Ltd, and at the Cube Mill of N. C. Brown (Storage Equipment) Ltd, 600 yards away. The Rosebank Mill was damaged by fire in similar circumstances last January.

Fire damages school

Fire damaged part of Northfields School in Hessel Road, Ealing, London, last night. No one was hurt.

Nameless caller found out

A person who made anonymous telephone calls to a house in Eastcombe, Gloucestershire, was identified yesterday as a girl aged two. Mr L. Evans, of Westerland, Eastcombe, who received 12 calls before the child's mother found out, said yesterday: "We didn't mind the calls, but the child was running up a big bill."

Quite a year

1974 was the year of the IRA, the hammer and the three-day week. Archbishop Macarios, general elections, Richard Nixon the DC10 crash, Ronald Milnech, bottom spanking, Lord Lucan the Flixborough disaster, Patti Hearst and the Beatles, at the time and much more. The *Sunday Times* analyses tomorrow in its Review of the Year.

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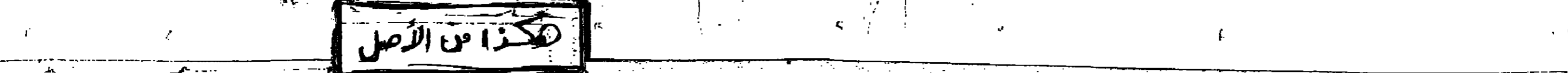
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# Public opinion plays part in plans for Greater Manchester

From John Chartres Manchester

One of the biggest "public participation" operations conducted by a local authority since the phrase was coined in the Skiffington report four years ago is reaching an advanced stage in Manchester.

Greater Manchester County Council, now responsible for structure planning that will affect the lives of 2,500,000 people over the next 20 years, is beginning to analyse data from a "17,500 attitudes survey" conducted for it by a public opinion research firm.

A million copies of a 32-page booklet called *Context* have been distributed to every household in the new county area, which stretches from the Cheshire border to north of Wigan and which historically grew into the most densely populated area of Britain with scant regard for the welfare of those living in it.

Reports of the first surveys conducted into such subjects as pollution, trends, housing, transport, open land and economic factors will probably be published as a series of separate booklets from the spring of 1975 onwards: and proposals for a number of alternative structure plans are expected to be ready by the end of the year. That should enable the council to produce its "preferred plan" by mid-1976, so that all public discussions can take place on it before it has to be submitted to the Government at the end of that year.

A second attitudes survey will probably be conducted in 1976 on the alternative structure plan; have been published.

The first survey has involved interviewing 2,000 people on subjects as housing, entertainment, education, shopping facilities and pollution; each interview lasting about 45

minutes. Subjects were selected carefully, with a balance given to communities with similar backgrounds and difficulties on the "cluster" principle.

Further broadsheets will be issued at various stages of the preparation of the structure plan, and from the whole process the planning team at the new county hall in the centre of Manchester city hopes to draw in a broad idea of people's views and wishes and build them into the scheme although the planners emphasize that final decisions will still lie with the elected councillors.

They certainly do not expect to be able to please all the people all of the time, and agree that structure planning, because of its necessarily broad and general terms, is probably one of the most difficult local authority functions to explain.

"It becomes much easier to awaken interest when you get down to the painting of double yellow lines on someone's shopping street or work out precisely where you are going to put a school or a swimming bath", said Mr Harry Fenton, assistant planning officer directly responsible for the participation operation.

Each of Greater Manchester's 10 district councils is being allocated the back page of regional editions of the broadsheet to set out local difficulties. Most district councils are also now publishing civic newspapers in which detailed local planning ideas are described.

"There is still a pretty vast barrier of suspicion about planning to be overcome", Mr Fenton said. "The first thing we are trying to do is to get away from jargon. There is no magic in the word participation. It is really all a slow, long-draw-out education process."

## In brief

### New factory for Flixborough

Humberside County Council has approved plans to build an ammonium sulphate plant on the site of the devastated Flixborough chemical factory, where 28 men died in an explosion seven months ago.

More than 70 people from villages affected by the blast submitted written objections to the scheme.

### Train kills patient

Mrs Janet Catherine Curtis, aged 53, of Sarn Hill, Sarn, Bridgend, a patient, walked unnoticed from a hospital yesterday, was killed on the railway 30 yards away by an express train.

### Fishing takeover

A fishing stretch on the upper river Wensum between Attlebridge and Ringland has been acquired by the Anglian water authority for a trial period of a year.

### Man dies in prison

Robin Ian Gorton, aged 29, remanded in custody at Birmingham magistrates' court on Christmas Eve charged with possessing drugs, died yesterday in Birmingham prison.

### Wild boar killed

A wild boar which escaped 12 hours earlier from Coventry Zoo was found dead yesterday on the railway near by having been apparently hit by a train.

### Education pay

A four-page inset on the Houghton report, with full details of the new salary scales proposed for colleges and polytechnics is published today in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*.

## WEST EUROPE

# W Germans spend 300m marks a year to be frightened

From Dan van der Vat Bonn, Dec 27

Although the West Germans were as full of Christmas spirit as anybody else this year, you had to look hard to find any signs of it in their favourite newspaper. As I write, I have before me editions of the daily *Bild Zeitung* and its Sunday sister-paper, *Bild am Sonntag*, both published in Hamburg.

*Bild Zeitung* is often loosely likened to the *Daily Mirror*—and this strikes the objective observer as a little hard on the British paper. The only things the two have in common are colossal circulations and a taste for fat headlines and saucy pictures. Politically, they could hardly be further apart. The *Bild* sells four million copies a day, so probably 10 million people—one-sixth of the West German population—read it.

An intelligent reader of German could probably get through it in four minutes, or five if he also wants to know what is on television. It rarely runs to more than eight text size pages.

*Bild am Sonntag* is much fatter, and at the equivalent of 17p a copy, four times as much as the daily, regales its readers with the latest broken royal marriages, war serials and the private lives of people in show business. The Sunday newspaper uses such a large type that there is never room for any actual text on the front

page—just headlines. On Sunday, December 15, a huge headline occupying half the front page said: "Thus died Fritz Szepan", who was a footballer. Above that, a smaller headline reported: "Princess Grace badly ill".

The essential character of the paper is to serve as the leading national angst machine. Clearly the West Germans like to have a frightener put on them each day; otherwise it could be assumed that they would not spend 300 million marks a year buying it.

For me the headline of the year came out last month. In the very fattest size of type in its considerable arsenal, underscored in red ink (which seems to be gilding fine gold a little), the main headline said: "Sixty politicians shot dead." I had worked out that this would just about cover the entire Upper House plus the Federal Cabinet. Then I read in the accompanying report that the massacre had occurred in Ethiopia.

To return to the present, on Thursday last week the main headline said: "Woman goes blind through the pill", which should have frightened a few million people here.

Yet it is strange how a Bonn correspondent tends, on arrival at the office, to turn to *Bild* first of all the papers. At least he can be sure that it will inject a little colour into the morning—even if that colour is blood red.



A rescue miner tries to comfort a dead colleague's wife in Liévin, northern France.

# Restaurant prices are frozen in Paris

From Our Own Correspondent Paris, Dec 27

The price of a meal or a drink in a Paris restaurant or café is to be frozen from Thursday until March 31.

31 Jean-Pierre Fourcade, the Minister of Economics and Finance, ordered the freeze today after his price inspectors reported that restaurant prices had gone up in Paris on average by more than 16 per cent in a 12-month period ending October, although the retailers' prices of their provisions showed only an 11 per cent increase.

During October Parisian restaurateurs were increasing their prices at an annual equivalent of more than 30 per cent, the inspectors found.

The Federation of Paris Hotel, Restaurant and Café Proprietors indicated today that its members would accept a three-month standstill, but if it was prolonged there would be strikes.

The federation claimed that notwithstanding the recent price increases the running of a Paris restaurant was becoming steadily less profitable.

Mr Fourcade today also ordered a tightened watch on shopkeepers' profit margins. They must, he said, in future pass on any wholesalers' reductions and stop the practice of regularly up-pricing their stock.

## wards for would-be rescuers who died

From Our Correspondent Fermline

Two people who died trying to rescue others were posthumously awarded memorial plaques by the Carnegie Fund Trust yesterday.

James Corbett, aged 26, died, a fire protection spokesman of Sunbury-on-Thames at Sunbury on 11.

fell out of a 20ft skiff. Mr Corbett and some 15 had hired for the afternoon. Knowing she was unable to swim, he dived fully clothed

and reached her, but she struggled and both went under several times before they drifted apart. The woman was rescued by another boat but Mr Corbett sank.

His sister said: "Mr Corbett's heroic efforts in swimming rapidly to the drowning woman and supporting her until help came exhausted him to a point where he was unable to remain afloat himself."

Mrs Margaret Mitchell, aged 43, a housewife, was at her home in Woodford Square, Kensington, London, with her two daughters, aged 15 and 10, and a nine-year-old friend of her younger daughter when at about

midnight on June 22 her electric blanket began to smoulder. She put the blanket and sheets in the bathroom to soak and sprinkled water on the mattress but about four hours later after they had all gone back to bed Mrs Mitchell awoke to find the house filled with smoke.

Her daughters made their way to the ground floor but the visiting child refused to do so through the smoke. Mrs Mitchell, who was waiting to enter hospital for an operation, went back to the top floor to lead her down. They became trapped and were overcome by smoke and fumes. Mrs Mitchell's husband was abroad.

## Dutch subsidy to 'Marxist' group

From Sue Masterman The Hague, Dec 27

The award of a Government subsidy by Mr Harry van Doorn, the Dutch Minister of Culture, to the theatre workshop group Prologue has ended a period of collaboration between the Government and the Opposition, which lasted through the oil crisis and its economic consequences.

Prologue is an experimental group operating in the south of the Netherlands. It performs mainly for schools and working men's clubs, and its message is clear—capitalism is the root of all evil and life for the working classes will only become tolerable under a socialist regime. This year the province of Limburg and the city of Eindhoven refused to grant it financial support.

The subsidizing of experimental theatre projects, theatre workshops, and other cultural forms which are not self-supporting, is general practice in the Netherlands. Only professional entertainment is supposed to pay for itself.

Early in December, just before the Ministry of Culture was due to announce its decision on Prologue's application for a state subsidy to replace the local subsidies which the group had been refused, the attack was launched. Mrs Phia van Veenendaal, a Democratic Socialist MP gave her opinion of Prologue in an interview with *De Telegraaf*, Holland's leading daily newspaper. She was quoted as accusing Prologue of being a Marxist cover organization, and taking part in irregular activities.

Subsequent clashes between the newspaper, the politician and the theatre workshop brought a hardening of atti-

tudes, and Prologue took both the newspaper and the politician to court. On December 16, *De Telegraaf* was ordered to publish an apology on its front page, which it did. A week later on December 22, Mrs van Veenendaal was ordered by the judge not to repeat any of the accusations which she could not substantiate in court.

Within hours, Mr van Doorn announced that the state had awarded Prologue a grant; but he added that it was temporary because Prologue, as a regional theatre, should be supported from regional funds.

Since then the press has been searching for evidence against Prologue, while the ranks of the Democratic Socialists have been divided into those who think that Mrs van Veenendaal should resign and those who believe that there is more to the affair than political shadow boxing.

## South Moluccans attack World Court building

The Hague, Dec 27.—Demonstrators demanding independence for the south Molucca islands from Indonesia did serious damage to the headquarters of the International Court of Justice in the Peace Palace in The Hague today.

About 30 people from Ambon, one of the Moluccas, smashed their way through the glass doors at the entrance of the building and hurled fire bombs into a room on the first floor, badly burning a Turkish carpet 540ft square.

They wrecked the mechanism of the clock in the mock medieval tower, shattered priceless huge Chinese vases in the Japanese room, and smashed the tall candelabra set along the staircase leading to the first floor.

The palace administrator said that it was impossible to estimate the cost of the damage.

Later 500 demonstrators, hurling stones and fire bombs clashed outside the Indonesian Embassy with 150 steel-helmeted police. Eight arrests were made.

The demonstrators had massed outside the office of Mr Joop den Uyl, the Prime Minister. A small deputation was allowed in to present a petition calling for the island's independence and the freeing of political prisoners in Indonesia, to the Secretary General of the Dutch administrative services.

A spokesman for the demonstrators said that they were protesting against alleged torture of south Moluccans in Indonesia.

South Moluccans living in Holland have set up their own republic in exile.—Reuter and Agence France Presse.

# Saddam Hussein on Gold and International Monetary System

Mr. Saddam Hussein, Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council in the Republic of Iraq, made the following statement to the Iraqi News Agency on December 26th on the question of gold and the international monetary system.

Mr. Saddam Hussein said:

"We are following the new developments in the gold policy and the interests of the under-developed countries, including the oil-producing countries

"Any country or any group of countries that take any step leading to the intensification of inflation in the world should in our opinion, bear the responsibility of such an action.

"Iraq has repeatedly announced at OPEC and other meetings that the continuation of inflation in the advanced industrial countries would lead, directly or indirectly, to a rise in the prices of manufactured goods, raw materials, foodstuffs and energy, thus increasing the financial burdens of the under-developed countries.

"We do not agree to individualist remedies to the gold policy carried out outside a general international agreement, because though such remedies might lead to the creation of monetary liquidity in the advanced countries, yet they

will inflict harm on the under-developed countries, at least in two aspects: firstly, decreasing the issuance of new private withdrawals that are distributed to the under-developed countries, and secondly, increasing the monetary and financial burdens as a result of the rise in the rate of inflation and the deterioration of the standard of living of the peoples of these countries.

"Individual remedies might also drive at enabling the industrial countries to avoid their responsibilities for extending the necessary technical and economic aid to the under-developed countries and at switching the whole burden of these responsibilities upon the oil-producing countries that will themselves become victims of the rise in the rates of inflation.

"We call upon all under-developed countries, particularly the oil-producing countries, to unify their efforts and activities—through the Transitional Committee for Reformation of the World Monetary System, the United Nations or any other international organizations—to stress the need for remedying the question of gold and world monetary liquidity within the framework of an international general agreement."

December 26th



OVERSEAS

Repercussions of alleged domestic spying by CIA may affect future of leading US politicians

From Patrick Brogan Washington, Dec 27

President Ford is still examining a report on alleged illegal activities by the Central Intelligence Agency prepared by Mr William Colby, its director. He has yet to decide whether to publish it, and in what form, but there can be little doubt that it will appear in print fairly soon.

The allegations made by The New York Times are far too serious to be allowed to rest without full investigation. Several congressional committees are bound to demand to see Mr Colby's report—and Mr Colby. It is therefore not to be supposed that the secret will be kept much longer.

The newspaper said that it had discovered that the CIA had failed to inform Congress of the names of 10,000 Americans, mainly from 1953, and for Mr Colby, who succeeded him, have claimed that all illegal activities were

stopped as soon as they discovered them.

The blame is thus shifted back on to the shoulders of Mr Richard Helms, their predecessor, now Ambassador to Iran.

However, many strange things happened, including a large number of suspicious burglaries, as recently as last summer. If it is proved that any of them were the work of the CIA's illegal counter-intelligence arm, then Dr Schlesinger, now Secretary of Defense, may lose his job.

If it emerges that the fruits of these investigations, and the way in which they were carried out, were reported to the President's National Security Council, then its chairman, Dr Henry Kissinger, may suddenly be in serious trouble.

A partial list of mysterious burglaries was published in the magazine Rolling Stone in October. The magazine did not claim that the CIA was involved, suggesting instead that the "plumbers", who carried out the Watergate burglaries, and perhaps the FBI were behind them.

The best known of these burglaries were carried out against the offices of Chilean diplomats in 1972.

Among the victims of suspicious burglaries in 1973 and 1974 were the organization Common Cause, in February,

1974, the Senate permanent investigations subcommittee (whose chairman is Senator Henry Jackson) in July, 1974, Senator Lowell Weicker, in April, 1973, Mr Tad Sulem, a reporter, in February, 1973, lawyers representing various alleged conspirators (the Rev Daniel Berrigan, the Quakers, the Seattle 7, the Detroit 13, and so on).

The curious thing about all these burglaries is that papers were ransacked or stolen but rarely if ever taken. If America had not just gone through Watergate, this would be the biggest story of the decade. Even so, it is going to have some very considerable repercussions.

Washington, Dec 27.—Representative Michael Harrington, a Massachusetts Democrat, today filed a law suit against Mr Colby, Dr Kissinger and Mr William Simon, the Treasury Secretary. In the suit he alleged that the CIA had violated its charter by engaging in activities other than strict intelligence gathering.

The suit named Dr Kissinger in his capacity as national security adviser to the President, and Mr Simon because the Treasury disburses funds to the agency, even though Congress had not specifically authorized this practice.—Reuter.



President Sadat (extreme left in first row of civilians) marches in the funeral procession in Cairo for Field Marshal Ismail. Next to him are the two sons of the man eulogized in the Arab world for his conduct of the 1973 war against Israel.

Funeral in Cairo of war hero

From Our Correspondent Cairo, Dec 27

Lieutenant-General Muhammad Abdul Ghani al-Gamassi, Egypt's new War Minister, flies to Moscow tomorrow on an urgent mission at the invitation of Mr Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet Party leader.

The authoritative daily newspaper Al-Ahram said today that Mr Ismail Fahmy, the Foreign Minister, also would leave with General Gamassi for talks with the Russian leaders on the Middle East and to discuss preparations for Mr Brezhnev's

visit to Cairo, due on January 14.

General Gamassi was appointed by President Sadat last night as War Minister to succeed Field Marshal Ahmed Ismail, who died in London on Wednesday of lung cancer. It will be the general's first mission abroad as War Minister.

Last October he accompanied Mr Fahmy to Moscow for talks on the salute as the procession passed with the Field Marshal's coffin draped in the red, white and black Egyptian flag.

The coffin was placed on a gun carriage, which was followed by an officer carrying a cushion with the late commander's medals. They included the Collar of the Republic, awarded posthumously to him by President Sadat.

There were sobs as the coffin was put on the carriage after prayers at the mosque; and crowds stood on pavements, balconies and other vantage points, silently carrying banners saluting "the Arab hero who honourably fulfilled his mission". Cairo radio and television broadcast verses of the Koran and martial music in Cairo so far whether General Gamassi will be appointed to the post of commander-in-chief of the Egyptian and combined Arab forces which was held by Field Marshal Ismail. However, observers believe that General Gamassi, who enjoys President Sadat's confidence, might be given the two posts besides the War Ministry portfolio.

Cairo, Dec 27.—Cairo police today used tear gas to disperse a crowd of several hundred stone-throwing youths who were protesting at not being allowed to join the funeral march.—Reuter.

Marshall Ismail, who was buried with full military honours today. The cortege was led by President Sadat, high ranking Arab officials and Army chiefs. Thousands of mourners, including Field Marshal Ismail's comrades in arms, walked in the mile-long funeral procession.

Detachments of military police lined the route and took the salute as the procession passed with the Field Marshal's coffin draped in the red, white and black Egyptian flag.

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S Africans 'shot by guerrilla who broke truce'

Johannesburg, Dec 27.—The four South African policemen killed in Rhodesia on Christmas Eve were shot dead by a black nationalist who did not approve of the ceasefire in Rhodesia, a Daily Mail reporter here today.

In a report from Salisbury, the newspaper said that the facts of the killing, which marred what had appeared to be a truce in Rhodesia's two-year-old war in the border zone, were brought back to base by Police Constable C. G. C. Grobbler, who had been with the four other policemen but escaped with minor wounds.

According to the account the five South Africans and at least one black Rhodesian policeman were patrolling in three vehicles in the Rushinga area of the north-eastern operational zone.

The leading vehicle was flagged down by an unarmed guerrilla who told the policemen that under "terms of the ceasefire".

At this point, a "gang of possibly a dozen terrorists, all well armed, stepped out of the bush and at gunpoint made the security officers put down their weapons", the newspaper said.

The discussion on the ceasefire continued "with one of the terrorists arguing strongly against the ceasefire. After a while this man, who carried a machine gun, indicated that the talking was over and ordered fire at close range on the South Africans".

Four policemen died on the spot, while PC Grobbler managed to escape.

The Rhodesian African police man with the group is still missing. According to one version, he jumped into a nearby river and drowned when the guerrillas appeared.—Agence France Presse.

Threat of disease in waterless Darwin

Continued from page 1

Singapore, Dec 27.—Unopened presents under the Christmas tree, houses destroyed by howling winds and strange escapes from the cyclone. These were the stories told by Britons evacuated to Singapore tonight from Darwin.

Mrs Halina Davies, of Swansea, said that she and her family had sought refuge under a mattress all night as the cyclone tore down their house piece by piece.

Mrs Jennifer Shackelford said that her husband, Roger, had sat on a lavatory seat for four hours supporting the crumbling ceiling with his shoulders. The family squeezed into the lavatory, the last refuge in the house.

Ann Collins, aged 15 of Northampton, said that her family were about to open their Christmas presents. "Then the wind blew and the roof caved in. . . . We just had time to try and save ourselves—not the presents."

She was one of the 38 Britons on board an RAF Nimrod jet which evacuated them yesterday.

One family possessed only a large cardboard box with nothing but dolls inside. Most of the families had brought only a couple of suitcases.

The six men, 11 women and 21 children are expected to fly back to Britain on civilian flights tomorrow and Sunday. A second RAF aircraft was due in Singapore tomorrow with more British evacuees.—Reuter.

Our Business News Staff write: A spokesman for Lloyd's in London yesterday estimated that the claims on the London insurance market, arising from the Darwin disaster, while substantial, would be "in no way catastrophic".

The bulk of the damage was to homes, offices and small businesses. Most of this would be insured with local companies, some of them subsidiaries of United Kingdom insurance groups such as Commercial Union.

Lloyd's itself had only a minor direct exposure to these claims. But many of the local companies would have reinsured with Lloyd's, the spokesman said. It would take several months before the extent of these claims were known.

Leading article, page 11

Escaped convict shoots two women dead

From Our Own Correspondent New York, Dec 27

A farmer's wife and her daughter were found shot dead near Michigan City, Indiana last night after being held hostage for seven hours by an escaped convict. A second daughter, who had also been held hostage, was found unharmed, but was taken to hospital suffering from shock.

The police said afterward they had talked to the woman half an hour before the escapee had given assurance that they would not be harmed.

There was a possibility, an official said, that they had tried to overpower the man, who had been bleeding profusely from a cut he received while breaking a glass door. He had been serving a 10 to 20 year sentence for armed robbery.

The farm had been surrounded by police. In the course of the seven hours they spoke by telephone to the prisoner as he sat in his cell, and persuaded the prisoner to surrender. He came out of the house and dropped two guns.

Esther Williams driving charge

Ventura, California, Dec 27.—Esther Williams, the swimming film star of the 1940s, was arrested for drunken driving shortly before midnight on Christmas eve.

Miss Williams, aged 57, failed a sobriety test, and was taken to the Ventura County Jail. She was released yesterday on bail of \$300 (£130).

US senator scores a victory but overplays his hand in tussle with world's superpowers

Upsets on the rocky road to détente

From Frank Vogl United States Economics Correspondent Washington, Dec 27

The Ninety-third Congress passed the Trade Reform Bill and the Export-Import Bank Bill.

People breathed a heavy sigh of relief. Both are important for the development of world trade.

The former paves the way for the main international trade liberalization negotiations in the new year. The latter makes \$20,000m (£2,200m) in soft loans available over the next four years, for foreign investment ventures by American companies—North Sea oil development will be one of many projects to benefit directly.

But both Bills also have direct relevance to East-West trade. Both are amendments to the tariff laws, both are in many respects provocative.

The Soviet leadership has demonstrated clearly that it is infuriated over certain elements in both pieces of legislation.

Senior Administration officials in Washington profess anxiety that the tariff amendments may well be a lot more bumpy than they had hoped.

The Trade Reform Bill took more than 20 months to get through Congress, with the delay due primarily to an amendment by Senator Henry Jackson which tied trade concessions for communist countries directly to giving advance assurances of the relaxation of emigration restrictions.

The amendment was introduced by the sponsors to be seen as an attempt by Congress to interfere in the domestic policies of repressive countries.

To minimize the humiliation, the Russians made secret agreements with President Ford and Dr Henry Kissinger,

the Secretary of State. They accepted a formula that they were sure would meet the requirements of Congress, while not causing too much embarrassment. They gave firm assurances, in private, that they would abide by their word.

These laws are explicit. They do not include the imposition of special taxes on would-be emigrants, they are based on the concept that visas will be given to almost all people who wish to emigrate, and they carry no provisions whatever allowing harassment or punishment over the next four years.

The Soviet leaders also state that they would give no assurances whatever on the number of emigrants each year, because, they claimed, they had no means of assessing the demand for visas. They pretended that the outlook was for a decline.

The Soviet leaders could insist to the world that they had not given special assurances under United States congressional pressure, simply because they already had liberal emigration laws on the books.

Senator Jackson could be satisfied because the Soviet leaders had made it clear in private conversations with American leaders, so Dr Kissinger said, that for the first time they would abide by both the letter and the spirit of those emigration laws.

All would have been well had Senator Jackson not been so interested in boosting his chances of becoming the next President of the United States.

Dr Kissinger warned Senator Jackson repeatedly not to give the impression that the Soviet leaders were changing their policies because of his efforts, nor to heighten the false impression that the Soviet leaders had never given

assurances on the numbers of emigrants.

The volume of loans to be obtained from the export-import bank depended on the terms of a new Bill governing the bank. A Bill to extend its life for another four years has passed several congressional committees since early last summer, with heated arguments on whether Congress should restrict the volume of loans the bank could grant to the Soviet Union.

Proponents of this view argued that it was absurd to give 7 per cent loans to companies to develop energy in Siberia, when those same companies would have to pay 10 per cent, or more, on loans to develop energy within the United States.

The counter argument was simply and powerfully that the loans would stimulate trade between the super-powers and thereby create a nexus of agreements that both sides would have greater interest in preserving and expanding than destroying.

The Russians were furious. Tass carried its report of the private letter on emigration from Mr Cromley, the Soviet Foreign Minister, to Dr Kissinger. The aim, possibly, was to get Congress and the Administration worried and force a vote against the bank limitations.

At this point, at the same time, the Soviet Ambassador lodged a protest over the bank with Dr Kissinger, who, too late, was apprised of the un-doing.

On Tuesday, as the clock seemed set against any bank Bill passing through Congress, the White House capitulated, accepting that it was worth accepting limits on Soviet loans to obtain the Bill as a whole. The Secretary of State was still unaware it seems.

Minister rejects charge of leniency to junta men

From Our Correspondent Athens, Dec 27

Mr Evangelos Averoff, the Greek Defence Minister, tonight rejected accusations that he had enabled members of the deposed junta to survive within the Army by showing leniency and favouritism towards officers responsible for the dictatorship.

In a statement Mr Averoff said that retribution against junta ringleaders was continuing both through the courts, in cases involving penal offences, and by way of administrative or disciplinary punishment.

He had, he recalled, suspended some 40 senior officers through a "summary and Draconian procedure", put on

Dr Soares on mission of reconciliation in India

From Michael Hornsby

guese Foreign Minister arrived in India today on what he described as an historic mission of peace and reconciliation to restart a dialogue which has a tradition of centuries.

In a first round of talks with Mrs Gandhi, the Prime Minister, Dr Soares discussed the draft of a treaty providing for a resumption of Indo-Portuguese diplomatic relations, which he is expected to sign next Tuesday.

The treaty also will recognize formally Indian sovereignty over the former Portuguese enclaves of Goa, Diu and Daman, which were wrested

Ousted Thailand leader to face charges

From Our Correspondent Bangkok, Dec 27

Field-Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, the former Prime Minister of Thailand, is reported to be under detention after his unexpected return from exile to Bangkok today.

Dr Prakob Hutasingh, the Deputy Prime Minister, announced after an emergency Cabinet session lasting four hours that Marshal Thanom would be detained while charges were drawn up against him for his involvement in the suppression of student demonstrations which preceded his departure from Thailand in October last year.

Dr Prakob said that the marshal visited his ailing father, who is 89.

China has second thoughts about US links

From David Bonavia Peking, Dec 27

The events of the past year have evidently persuaded the Chinese leadership to question the merits of too much dependence on the West for support in the continuing political struggle with Moscow.

As a result, Peking has begun playing down its public expressed fears of the Soviet Union, though without relaxing its ideological hostility, and has appeared less enthusiastic about the three-year-old rapprochement with the United States.

Internally, 1974 has been a year of sharp political swings, not to be compared with the upheavals of 1966, but disturbing none the less. After the strong emphasis on "struggle" during the first half of the year, when many leading figures in the provinces were attacked by name in wall posters, the leadership strongly proposed the ideas of harmony and unity in the second half.

The xenophobic spasm which soured China's foreign relations in the early months of the year was soon forgotten. It was probably related to some internal political conflict.

The face of the leadership has undergone its biggest change since the disgrace and death of the late Marshal Lin Biao in 1971.

Mr Chou En-lai, the Prime Minister, has had his work load severely cut since May when it was first disclosed that he was seriously ill, though the nature of his illness has never been revealed officially.

Since then, Mr Teng Hsiang-ping, who was disgraced as secretary-general of the Communist Party seven years ago and rehabilitated only last year as a Deputy Prime Minister, has become the most prominent among those leaders who are publicly active.

China has seen Western Europe, in whose development it had recently pinned much faith, seriously weakened by the oil crisis and possibly flagging in its determination to resist Soviet political expansion.

China's perception of the threat to Europe apparently explains the country's puzzling shift of tactics towards Moscow. After a period of many months in which Peking gave warning almost daily of a Soviet "surprise attack" against China, Chinese officials have blandly disclaimed ever having believed in it.

They emphasize that the main Soviet threat is to Europe and that it is the West that should be on its guard. But they have not reduced in any way the daily barrage of propaganda against Moscow in every sphere. The latest pro-

nouncements on the border issue are as hard as they have ever been.

There is good reason to believe that China is already confident in the deterrent power of its nuclear weapons and delivery systems in the event of Soviet threats.

Peking's biggest disappointment in 1974 was probably the growing accord between Washington and Moscow on a number of issues, such as disarmament and the Middle East. This can only contribute to a feeling that China is being squeezed out of the influential position in world affairs which seemed to be promised after Peking took its seat at the United Nations.

The visit to Peking by Dr Henry Kissinger, the United States Secretary of State, who came virtually empty handed after the Soviet-American summit near Vladivostok, symbolized the reasons for China's disappointment.

The promise of a visit next year by President Ford is of little value unless it can be linked with some more substantial progress over the Taiwan issue. Chinese officials have been hinting strongly at disillusionment with the American unwillingness to move faster in the matter.

Equatorial Guinea denies jail deaths report

From Harry Debelius Madrid, Dec 27

The Chargé d'Affaires of Equatorial Guinea denied in Madrid today allegations that hundreds of political prisoners had been killed by order of President Francisco Macias Nguema.

But he agreed that a number of the President's political opponents had been executed or had died in jail.

The diplomat, Mr Carmelo Nvono Nca Manene, also said that "There are not more than 15 political prisoners" in the country. It gained independence from Spain in 1968. He added, however, that "subversion against the lifetime President was being suppressed."

He said that a number of political figures had died after two unsuccessful coups. Some, he alleged, had been involved in both plots, including Mr Antonio Echije Eche, member of a presidential council, and Mr Marcos Mba Obiang, a police inspector. The names of both appeared on a list of executed people distributed in Madrid by exiles.

Mr Miki's plan to put his party's house in order

From Peter Hazelhurst Tokyo, Dec 27

Taking another step to refurbish the tarnished image of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Mr Takeo Miki, the Japanese Prime Minister, asked party executives today to examine a vague and tentative plan to curb corporate donations to political parties.

The plan was submitted to the party hierarchy almost five months after the Liberal Democrats suffered an election setback in July when many of Japan's biggest industrial combines and trading houses pumped huge fortunes into politics to influence the ruling party's campaign.

Under Mr Miki's new plan to reform political morality, organizations will be allowed to accept donations only from individual supporters after a transitional period of three

years. During the transitional period political donations by corporate organizations will be restricted on the basis of the size of the firm.

Mr Miki has also suggested that all expenses by political parties should be settled by cheque.

According to the Home Ministry's latest statistics, 1,373 political organizations, including the five main parties, received £77m in the first six months of the year before large sums of money were injected into election campaigns in July.

Yesterday Mr Miki took an unprecedented step and published details of his assets. He holds shares in a broadcasting company, a property firm and owns two homes in Tokyo, three villas in the country and a small office building in Tokushima, his native village.





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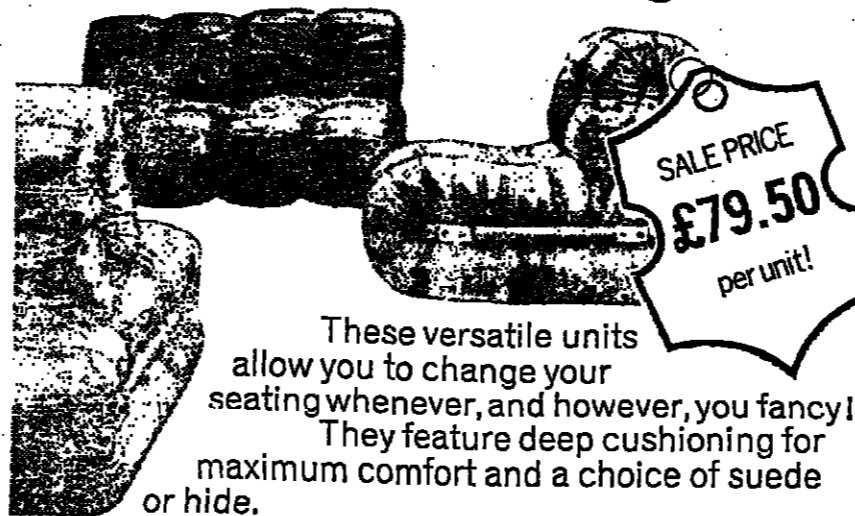
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# Pussy Owl sings opera

by Brigid Brophy

"This is the one", Mr Pumpelwitz said, pausing beside a doorway that was larger and more public-looking than the others in the green. "I'm sure this is the one I saw him go in at."

Mrs Frax put her shopping bag down on the pavement and surveyed the porch. "It was exactly here", Mr Pumpelwitz said.

Mrs Frax looked upwards and read the lettering over the door. "This is it", she cried. She tucked her umbrella beneath her arm, snatched up her shopping bag and ran towards the doorway.

Mr Pumpelwitz read the lettering, which said PEACH-MELBA SCHOOL OF OPERA, and hurried after Mrs Frax. They pushed one each of a handsome pair of brown glass swing doors and entered a foyer.

"Can I help you?" asked a woman who was sitting behind a reception desk. "Yes, please", Mr Pumpelwitz replied, approaching the desk in a business-like way. "Have you seen—Well, has a—It's rather hard to explain—"

"Mr Pumpelwitz", Mrs Frax called from another part of the foyer, "there's a notice here that says 'To the Auditions:'"

"That'll be where he is", Mr Pumpelwitz said, running to join Mrs Frax and giving a goodbye smile to the receptionist.

"One moment, please", the receptionist said. She stood up behind her desk. "The auditions, which Mr Peach and Mr Melba are holding at present, are for candidates who wish to enter the School. Are you candidates?"

"Not personally", Mrs Frax replied, setting off down a corridor in the direction pointed by the notice. "But it's important we get to the auditions in time."

"Are you the parents or guardians of a candidate?"

"No", Mr Pumpelwitz said, rather strongly.

"We're friends of a candidate", Mrs Frax said amiably but hurriedly over her shoulder. "At least, we think he's probably a candidate by now—which is why we must rush."

"But Mr Peach and Mr Melba don't like the auditions to be interrupted", the receptionist said in a protesting way.

"I imagine Mr Peach and Mr Melba will be nothing but relieved to see us", Mr Pumpelwitz answered.

Quickly he followed Mrs Frax, who had turned round to look at him.

Opening the door softly, Mrs Frax and Mr Pumpelwitz stepped into a small theatre.

Rows of seats, their backs turned to the newcomers, led down to a stage, on which a man was standing, singing.

In the space between the front row and the stage there was an upright piano, at which a man was sitting, playing.

As quietly as possible Mrs Frax and Mr Pumpelwitz made their way down the centre aisle, peering carefully, as they went, along each row of seats.

Only the front row was occupied. There, to the right of the centre aisle, sat two men, listening very intently to the singer.

To the left sat several young men and women, all of whom seemed to sit in their seats in a very upright and unmoving way, as though they were scared or, at the least, on their best behaviour.

"Those must be the candidates", Mr Pumpelwitz mouthed to Mrs Frax.

"But he's not there", she mouthed back.

Even though they had scarcely whispered and had lip-read rather than heard each other, one of the men on the right twisted round and held a finger before his mouth.

Mr Pumpelwitz and Mrs Frax slipped into one of the empty rows and, in slow motion, so as to creak and rustle as little as they could, sat down.

The singer brought his song to an end. A second or two afterwards, the pianist finished off the accompaniment.

There was silence. The two men in the right-hand part of the front row were intently making notes in notebooks.

A loud, harsh voice suddenly said: "I can sing much better than that."

The pianist whirled round on his revolving stool and looked in horror at the row of candidates.

Mrs Frax and Mr Pumpelwitz looked at each other.

One of the two men at the right said: "I'm distressed to hear such a rude and offensive remark. I do not know who made it. But I should like to say that that is not the spirit we encourage at the Peach-Melba School, is it, Mr Melba?"

"It certainly is not, Mr Peach", the second man replied. "At the Peach-Melba School, students work together as colleagues."

"Especially", added Mr Peach, whose voice was deep and warm and who pronounced each syllable separately and roundly, "when we all work together in preparation for the public performance we give at the end of term."

"It is one of our boasts", said Mr Melba, whose voice was high, clear and with a heroic ring to it, "that we put people in a mind of a young prince of chivalry inspiring his soldiers to battle, that our students undergo the experience of working together as a company. Opera is a matter of cooperation. Indeed, as Mr Peach once remarked, opera should really be called co-opera."

"A little joke of mine", said Mr Peach, his voice becoming even deeper and more velvet with pleasure, "which Mr Melba flatters me by remembering. However, let us now, bearing the spirit of cooperation in mind, put the offensive incident behind us and continue the auditions."

"Thank you for singing to us, candidate number three", Mr Melba said. The singer jumped down from the stage and returned to his place in the front row on the left. "Is the next candidate ready?"

"Are you ready, Mr Tripple?", Mr Peach asked the pianist.

"Ready when you are", Mr Tripple replied, giving a brisk twist to his stool so that he faced the keyboard again.

"One moment", Mr Melba said, holding up his hand. "I'm sorry to delay you, Mr Tripple. But I think there's a cat under your piano."

"Really?", Mr Tripple said. He slid off the piano stool, knelt on the floor and peered beneath the piano.

"Personally, I love cats", Mr Melba said. "But it might be distracting for the candidates."

"It might be alarming for the cat", Mr Peach said. "Particularly if Mr Tripple were playing bass chords."

"Pussy", Mr Tripple called, the side of his face flat against the floor. "Pussy—"

"I distinctly saw a tail", said Mr Melba. "Rather a plump tail. And gingerish."

"I'm afraid we arrived too late", Mr Pumpelwitz whispered to Mrs Frax.

"Pussy", Mr Tripple called again. "Pussy, pussy."

There was a heavy thud on the top of the piano. Everybody, including Mr Tripple, who sat quickly back on his heels, stared.

A solid, furry creature was standing on the piano top and staring back at everybody—with large, shiny eyes that seemed to change colour as you looked at them. The creature was about the size of a large cat, but it stood on two legs, not four, and it was feathered as well as furry.

It stood—but only just, because it was a little rocky after its heavy landing.

It had a furry tail, partly ginger and partly grey. The end of the tail was drooping insolently over the edge of the piano top and dangling above the keyboard.

"Pussy is only the first half of my name", the creature said, in the same harsh voice which had commented rudely on candidate number three's performance. "My full name is Pussy Owl."

"You can speak", exclaimed Mr Tripple.

"It's a waste of time to remark on the obvious, Tripple", Pussy Owl said. "Of course I can speak. What's more to the point is that I can sing."

"That's the tail I saw", Mr Melba said, his voice breathy with astonishment.

"The end of the tail twitched—"

"...and when it was stuck up you to describe my tail as plump, Melba. As a matter of fact, my tail is of the exact thickness that a tail ought to be. Plumper than my tail is fat. Thinner than my tail is skinny."

"We did arrive too late", said Mr Pumpelwitz.

"Oh, are you here, Pumpelwitz?" said Pussy Owl, peering from the top of the piano into the auditorium. "And Mrs Frax?"

"He raised one of his wings and gave a brief wave. "No, you're not too late."

"Are you", Mr Peach asked, turning round to address Mrs Frax and Mr Pumpelwitz, "are you—well, are you in charge of him?"

"No", said Mr Pumpelwitz quickly.

"No", said Pussy Owl, stamping one of his feet with a thud on the piano top. "They're just friends of mine. I was afraid they weren't going to get here in time. But it's all right. They haven't missed anything, because I haven't sung yet."

"Are you implying that you want to sing?" Mr Peach asked, his full, deep voice drained almost to a squeak.

"That's right", said Pussy Owl. "I'll give my audition now."

"We must get this clear", Mr Melba said. He rose and, clasping his notebook tightly, approached the piano. "You want to be auditioned for entrance to the Peach-Melba School? You want to come here to learn singing?"

"No", said Pussy Owl.

"Well then—", Mr Melba said, beginning to shrug.

"I want to come here to teach singing", Pussy Owl said.

"That's out of the question", said Mr Melba.

"There are no vacancies on the teaching staff", said Mr Peach, rising and coming to stand beside Mr Melba as if in defensive alliance.

"Peach and I undertake all the vocal instruction ourselves", said Mr Melba.

"Besides", put in Mr Tripple, who was still frozen in his squat on the floor, "what are your qualifications for teaching?"

"My qualifications", Pussy Owl replied, with a condescending nod towards Mr Tripple, "are the singular beauty, power and range of my singing voice."

"As for you two", he went on, turning his attention back to Mr Peach and Mr Melba, "what about this operatic performance you put on at the end of term? I'll bet the two of you don't sing all the parts in that, just on your own."

"The opera is sung by students, not staff", Mr Melba said.

"Mr Melba is the producer", said Mr Peach. "But the singing roles are taken by students."

"In that case", said Pussy Owl, "I'll be a student."

"So you are applying for admission, after all", Mr Melba said. He signed and opened his notebook. "I must take your particulars, then. Surname and initials, please."

"Owl, P.", said Pussy Owl. "Zoological name: *Strix Felix*."

"We haven't a space for the zoological name on the application form", Mr Melba said.

"All our students till now have been *Homo Sapiens*", said Mr Peach.

"Then it's time you broadened your horizons", Pussy Owl replied. "When I have a moment to spare, I'll draw you up a better application form. Next question?"

"Age?" said Mr Melba.



Illustration by David Frankland

"Two foot one."

"I think that must be your height, not your age."

"I daresay it is", said Pussy Owl in a careless way. "As a matter of fact, operatic stars usually keep their age a secret."

"You're not a star yet", murmured Mr Tripple from the floor, too quietly for Pussy Owl to hear.

"Write down my height, Melba", Pussy Owl said, with an impatient wave of one of his wings towards Mr Melba's notebook.

"It's a very good height. You ought to have a record of it. Taller than me is overgrown. Shorter than me is dwarfish."

Resignedly Mr Melba made a note.

"Next question", demanded Pussy Owl. "You're awfully slow at your job, Melba."

"Instrument?" Mr Melba asked.

"What do you mean?" said Pussy Owl. "I sing."

"Students aren't allowed to study voice alone. They have to study an instrument as well."

"Oh", said Pussy Owl. "Oh well, I play the triangle." He rose rather heavily on to tiptoe and called into the auditorium: "Don't, I, Mrs Frax and Mr Pumpelwitz?"

"Brilliantly", Mr Pumpelwitz said.

"Mr Peach advised Mr Melba: 'Write down Percussion.'"

"All right", Mr Melba said, "if you think it satisfactory, Mr Peach." He wrote, and then looked up at Pussy Owl.

"Register?"

"Your singing voice", Mr Peach explained. "Is it tenor, baritone or bass?"

"Oh, I see", said Pussy Owl. "All of them."

"All of them?"

"And alto and treble, as well", Pussy Owl said. "Why don't you stop wasting time and listen to me singing?"

"It isn't really your turn", Mr Melba protested. "As a late applicant, you should come at the end."

"I'm bored with waiting", said Pussy Owl.

"Let's get it over with", said Mr Peach. Looking a little beaten, he and Mr Melba returned to their seats in the stalls.

"Ready, Mr Tripple?" asked Mr Melba.

"Ready", Mr Tripple replied. He rose briskly from the floor, strode to the piano and asked Pussy Owl: "Where's your music?"

"I don't need music."

"But I do", said Mr Tripple. "So that I can accompany you."

"I don't need accompaniment."

"Indeed", said Mr Tripple. He sat down on the piano stool, pushed it back from the keyboard and sat looking expectantly towards the top of the piano.

Pussy Owl stretched both his wings out horizontally and gave two little flicks with the tips, while he said: "Two, three."

Then he folded his wings to his sides again and sang, in a deep, booming and not very melodious voice:

Half way through his song, he paused, extended his wings again, whirred them for a moment and then, slowly and rather unsteadily, rose straight up into the air to a height of four or five feet above the top of the piano. There, with his wings stretched and his tail streaming behind him like the tail of a kite, he hovered. Meanwhile, this time in a high and screeching voice, he finished the song:

"By all means", said a young woman sitting in the candidates' row. Some pages of sheet music were handed along the row and then passed to Mr Tripple, who propped them on the music stand on the piano.

Pussy Owl walked noisily across the top of the piano and passed at the edge above the keyboard. He peered down towards the music.

"It doesn't look very good music", he said. "Not nearly as good as the Pussy Owl Song."

"Can you sight-read?" asked Mr Tripple.

"Of course", said Pussy Owl.

"Right, then", said Mr Tripple; and stretching his hands above the keys he prepared to play.

"But not when the music's upside down", said Pussy Owl.

"It's not upside down."

"It is from where I'm standing. From where I'm standing, when the music goes up it looks as if it's going down. So don't blame me if it sounds odd."

"I wonder if candidate number two would mind demonstrating?" asked Mr Melba. "Just a quick run-through, to give Pussy Owl an idea of what it sounds like?"

"Certainly", said candidate number two.

"Quite unnecessary", said Pussy Owl. "I can sight-read it perfectly, even if it is upside down."

"I'm sure you can", Mr Melba said soothingly. "The only reason I think a demonstration would help is that I'm hoping you'll fly round as you sing it to us, so you won't be able to sight-read it, as you won't be able to see the music. Will you sing it flying for us, please?"

"All right", Pussy Owl said ungraciously. "But it's not easy, you know, singing and flying."

Standing beside Mr Tripple, who accompanied her, candidate number two sang:

THESE ISLE, ALL ISLES IN-CHE-LINE, SEAT OF PEASANTS, AND OF LOVES; VENUS HERE, WILL CRUSE HER JEWELLING, AND FOR SAKS HER CAPTAIN SQUEW.

"I hope you won't find it too much strain to sing us just one more piece, Pussy Owl", Mr Melba said politely. "I'm sure you could borrow some music from one of the other candidates. What about that pretty piece of Purcell which candidate number two sang?"

When she had finished, Mr Peach and Mr Melba thanked her; and she gave an encouraging smile to Pussy Owl before going back to her seat.

"I can sing it a lot better than that", Pussy Owl said.

"Mr Melba", said Mr Peach, "are you sure you want to hear Pussy Owl sing again?"

"I want to hear him sing and see him fly again", Mr Melba said. "I've had an idea."

"Anyone in his senses who'd heard Pussy Owl sing once would want to hear him sing again", said Pussy Owl. "Come on, Tripple."

He stretched his wings, rose vertically (and rather wobblingly) and then began to fly in a slow, uncertain circle round the auditorium.

As he flew, he suddenly (so suddenly that Mr Tripple had to hurry the beat to catch up with him) began to sing, in a loud, squawking voice:

"Fairnest owl, all owls excell..."

"Stop", called out Mr Peach, holding his hands over his ears.

With a bump Pussy Owl landed on the floor in front of him. "What's the matter?"

"Many things", Mr Peach replied. "I'll try to go through them in order. First, your diction. It's appalling. You seemed to be singing 'Fairnest owl' instead of 'Fairnest owl'."

"Fairnest owl", that's right", said Pussy Owl. "Fairnest owl" is the correct wording."

"Oh no it's not", cried Mr Tripple, advancing towards Pussy Owl and bringing the sheet music with him. "Look. It's printed here quite clearly. It's 'Isle'."

"You've got an incorrect version", Pussy Owl said coolly.

"Pussy Owl", said Mr Peach, his voice very deep and very controlled. "This is a well-known piece of music. The words are by the great English poet John Dryden. The song is from the patriotic opera *King Arthur*, by the great English composer Henry Purcell. The—"

"You've got his name wrong, too", Pussy Owl interrupted.

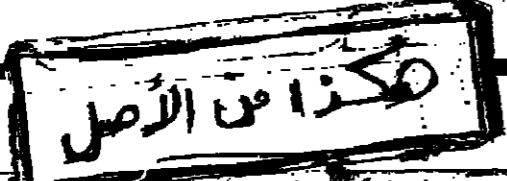
"I have NOT", exclaimed Mr Peach. "I have been teaching the music of Henry Purcell to students for twenty—"

"The correct form of the name", Pussy Owl said, "is Puss-Owl. Henry Puss-Owl is an ancestor of mine. My talent for opera is inherited. Family tradition has preserved the correct spelling and pronunciation of the name, along with the correct words of the song, which goes: 'Fairnest owl, all owls excelling'. Henry Puss-Owl wrote the song in praise of our family. The owl who excels all other owls is, of course, the owl who is also a cat."

"I have never heard anything like it", said Mr Tripple; and he retired to the piano stool and lowered his head into his hands.

"No, of course you haven't", Pussy Owl said. "My singing voice is unique, combining as it does the hoop of an owl with the miaow of a cat."

Continued on page 9





# Sheila Hancock: spaghetti on my face

Deja Revue, which opens at the New London Theatre on Monday, is Sheila Hancock's third revue. She was in *One to Another* (1959) and *One Over The Eight* (1961). "I swore I'd never do another revue as long as I lived. It's horrendous. So much depends on things like running order—a number that goes frightfully well in one review dies a death if you move it to another."

One sketch is a send-up of Italian films in which spaghetti is flung about the stage, and it all goes over me. Even in a comedy, if the laughs don't come, you've still got the character to cling on to, and you've got the artists' eyes to look into. But if you're actually using your face full of spaghetti there's no other motive except to make people laugh, and if they don't, it's humiliating beyond belief. Nothing freezes you more. But on the other hand you can't think I won't do it properly and then I'll look less of a fool. In fact you look more of a fool.

Playing the show in Birmingham just after the IRA bombing she felt like an ENSA performer rallying morale during the war. "Here was a town that was shocked and stunned and unhappy, and one really did have a feeling that the show was a couple of hours of forgetfulness, fun and giggles. I don't think there's anything quite like it in London. I hope everybody will come and let their hair down. I greatly believe there must be serious plays. What survives every civilization? The art, the culture—doesn't it? And therefore

I'm not saying that London should be full of revues, but do think it would be a good thing if there was a London theatre that constantly had revues and was constantly hitting at targets, rather in the way that *Was the Week That Was* did on the air. There's a lot that needs sending up at the moment."

Sheila Hancock enjoys "the out-front technique and the eye-to-eye connexion with the audience—that revue demands." "It's what we used to do at Stratford East. I only did *Make Me an Offer* there in 1959, but I worshipped Joan Littlewood so much I used to go back and rehearse for things I wasn't going to be in. Up until then I'd been in weekly rep for years and years and years. One stuck very much to the rules and to French Acting Editions. She was the first one that made me like the audience. She knew I was intrinsically frightened of them. My instinct was that they were going to dislike me. She used to come into my dressing-room and say 'They're all out there, and I've heard them saying that they can't wait to see Sheila Hancock because they've heard how marvellous she is.' It was all absolute lies, but you had to go on with the confidence that they were going to come to you, and therefore you had to believe you had something of value to offer them. She was very against selling yourself too much, but if you clam up on stage you get nothing back, and I think the same happens in life. If you're tortured by your own miseries and your own complexes, you build a wall round yourself.

"She used to say 'When you're in the wings, imagine that you're in a dark, damp, frightening forest, and out there on the stage is light, warmth and love.' And she used to call me her little clown, which gave me a *raison d'être*. I came from an ordinary background and when I was at RADA I had a very strong accent. At that time RADA was almost a finishing school for some people, and the beauties, certain people were groomed at starting out. Their looks rather than their talent.

My height was against me—I was 5 foot 8 1/2. I had to play leading ladies in rep, but as far as the West End was concerned, I didn't fit into any of the categories. It wasn't till the Littlewood revolution and the Royal Court—where funny-looking people suddenly came into their own—that one began to fit in."

Her part in *Make Me an Offer* was quite a small one and she wasn't very good, she feels, in *One Over The Eight*, though she got better during the run. But Michael Codron had great confidence in her. She'd made her first appearance in the West End when she took over the part of Lily Thompson in *Breach of Spring*, one of his earliest productions, and after *One Over The Eight* he offered her the role of Cyrene in Charles Dyer's two-act *Rattle of a Simple Man*.

"He'd already agreed to have Teddy Woodard, who was unknown, to do it in rep. And now Michael had got another backer, the idea of yet another not successful non-name, when, I imagine, he could have got any actress in the country to play it. It was a fabulous part, and in those days my names did draw audiences. What he had to do was audition for the backers. Teddy and I rehearsed a scene, and they quite liked it. The critics pretty unanimously liked the show, and it ran over a year. Michael went out on a limb, taking a risk on me, and he's done it time and time again with me."

Like Laurence Olivier, she believes that an actor should be able to amaze himself with his own courage, and she felt most in need of courage when she played Julia in Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance* in 1963. "It was a harrowing scene to do. I had to cry and to scream for my mother. I had to let go to the absolutely childish hysteria, and Peter Hall eventually broke it to me that he wanted me to end up lying on the floor and beating my head against the wall. I rehearsed in which I had to do that. I had to look at things that I prefer not to look at—depths of despair, depths of needing my mother, needing help. At read-throughs and when you're plotting it, you stand there trampling, hiding behind your script. You think 'Yes, well, I'll have a go at that scene tomorrow.' But ultimately the situation has to be created in which you do it. Without Peter making me believe I could do it, I couldn't have. I'd done plays like that in rep, but never in front of Dame Peggy Ashcroft at the Royal Shakespeare. In a way it was a breakthrough for me, and it had to be carried even further in the next Albee play, *All Over* (1972), in which the girl was even more aggressive, full of hate, full of loneliness—a distraught person. And at that time it was doubly difficult because I was in the archives of the week before. I was busy trying to hide the fact that I was those things—because I had to carry on—but I had to strip myself bare and yet discipline it. I couldn't just break down and indulge myself in front of people. I consider very much my peers. Angela Lansbury was incredible. She's so calm. In a sentence she could calm you and make you cope."

Ronald Hayman

# Sugar plums to savour

## The Nutcracker Festival Hall

John Percival That was not an empty score next to me at the Festival Hall. Although you could not see him, the Ghost of Christmas Past was sitting in it, and the trouble was that he would keep whispering in my ear all the time.

"Do you remember," he asked me, "the days when Markova and Chauviré and Surovich and Verdoy danced the Sugar Plum Fairy and John Gullpin used to be so marvellous as the Prince, and Pat Dolin played Drusselmeyer? Or what about Vassili Trunoff's Russian dance—do you ever see anything like that nowadays?"

I tried to hush him, but he would prattle on, eventually asking me: "Is there a single role tonight which you have not seen better danced in previous Festival Ballet seasons? True enough, I had to admit, but perhaps not quite so damning as it sounds. This Nutcracker, I tried to explain to him, is not for old fuddies like the Ghost and me. It is primarily a treat for children who have probably never seen ballet before and therefore cannot make comparisons.

Starting from scratch, they ought certainly to enjoy the Tchaikovsky music, he does. Terence Kern's lively direction. Maybe the party scene looks rather dreary, but they may identify with the children on stage. And learn bad manners. The transformations are superb, even if the Christmas tree missed its cue and disappeared several bars late.

I must say it was a relief when the Ghost changed places at the interval with his brother Christmas. Yes, to be sure, he chattered incessantly, too, but about how easily the production could be brought to life again.

"What is that barefoot child doing in the cold at the beginning?" Does Dr Strahlbaum really have so many one-eyed, long-nosed friends that he does not recognize the footman's description of Drusselmeyer? Surely the management can remember or invent more fluent choreography? And why not revert to the Benois costumes instead of the present tartyed-up versions?"

When not being interrupted, I thought Patricia Ruanne and Paul Clarke showed charm in the leads, although he needs to stretch his feet in the solos and she ought to hold her shoulders less tensely. And while we are making constructive suggestions, the waltz on Clara's boat for Clara's journey should be made from only half a shell, not a whole one, or it will capsize.

## South Bank Summer Music 1975

Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, will be the artistic collaborator for South Bank Summer Music for the three years 1975, 1976 and 1977. Alfred Brendel will give five Master Classes in the Purcell Room to six young professional pianists, who will be chosen at auditions to be held in London and Manchester.

## Gardening The day of the vegetable

As I remarked last week, most people, especially the non-gardeners, will remember 1974 as a wet year. The gardeners will remember it with mixed feelings, but I think in the whole, as being less exasperating than 1973.

Looking to the credit side gardeners will remember that while the winter and spring were dry indeed, we were sweet on rain in many parts of the country until the end of May, this enabled us to get on with our work. Growth, especially of newly planted or newly sown crops, was slow unless it was possible to water them. Also, in my garden at least, the nights in late May and June were chilly, so sweet corn, melons under cloches, and outdoor tomatoes did more poorly than usual.

If, as regards these crops, there is a moral to be learned, it is to be prepared to grow them on, even if it means reporting the weather can be played out in the first or even the second week of June, and then for preference under cloches. The melons obviously will keep under cloches, but tomatoes and sweet corn quickly grow too tall for the cloches, and these have to be removed.

But from July onwards vegetables really came into their own. As I have said many times, all you need to grow plants in soil, sunshine and water. This year, with regular and adequate rainfall—too much in some areas—we had wonderful crops of leeks, brussels sprouts, winter cabbages, savoy, and coming, of sprouting broccoli. Never had I seen better lettuces than those grown in the trials at the Royal Horticultural Society's Wisley gardens. They were sown on July 24, and in late September and early October were a splendid sight. Good old varieties like Feltham King and Lobloji's Green cos showed up well, as did certain new varieties which will no doubt see in the catalogues in due course.

I will admit I am a bit lazy about lettuces now. We sow a batch of mixed cos and cabbage varieties, three or four each, the first sowing in March and the last in August. This gives us plenty of lettuces all summer, and very few indeed get away from us and bolt to

## British Sporting Paintings Hayward Gallery

William Gaunt The British school of sporting painting that flourished in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has gained in estimation in recent times through the view it gives of rural and social life in the past and also for its considerable merits, pictorially speaking. The remarkable development of an art form, parallel with that of hunting and racing, is the well and amply illustrated nucleus of the Arts Council's exhibition, *British Sporting Paintings, 1650-1850*, now at the Hayward Gallery until February 23, with more than 200 pictures and many accompanying prints and drawings.

Comprehensiveness suggested a look back first to the century of the Stuarts when Henry Peake recalls the ancient royal tradition of stag-hunting in his hunting. Henry, Prince of Wales (James I's son) in the hunting field and George Barlow drew hounds and huntmen in his lively style. But a connected evolution begins with the work of John Wootton and Peter Tillemans. The examples given show the type of composition they devised, a mixture of aristocratic and squirearistic parades, comprising views of their estates and organized hunting parties in a panoramic setting.

John Wootton's sporting panoramas, if somewhat laboured and tinged by foreign influence, are valuable documents of country living at higher levels in the early part of the eighteenth century as well in such early masters as Henrietta Harley, *Hunting the hare on Ormskirk Estate*, and his view of Lord Portmore, and his trainer watching King George I's racehorse at exercise.

More surprising perhaps is the advent of painters who may be called "genuine primitives" in style, having spoken to or heard from others but with its own crispness of definition and nourished by a special acquaintance with the sporting world. James Seymour and the Sartorius family ably represent this distinctive style. Seymour could make an impressive portrait of Flying Childers, considered the first great thoroughbred racehorse. His *The Chase Match* adds to the interest of a celebrated sporting wager and event an entertaining precision of design.

The Hayward exhibition's account of the later eighteenth century is inevitably dominated by the great personality of George Stubbs. The selection made illustrates the grandeur he could evolve from simple elements, the sense of character and being, out in his grounds and stables as well as to horses and hounds, his naturalism in subject and setting, his harmonious grouping of mares and foals in a field. Purely as an artist, as in the great *Chalrack on Newmarket Heath*, he ascends to a level beyond that of Ben Marshall. Sawrey Gilpin and a score of able practitioners of about the same time or later who are also represented.

Gilpin's *The Death of a Fox* is a picture of savage pursuit that tends to arouse sympathy for the fox rather than its pursuers—though it is hard to believe the story that some hounds were killed and fastened in various positions so that the artist could copy their attitude in motion; or that as capable an artist as Gilpin would get any nearer the feeling of movement by employing such a device. It is in contrast with the brutal statements that John Fernelley depicts the elegance of the wealthy sportsman in the early nineteenth-century period of foxhunting.

Sport in the Hayward exhibition is not, however, all hunting and racing, and diverse illustration, Raeburn's *Dr Spens* is a fine example of the artist's brother-in-law, Charles, at Hampton Court, in the splendid aquatics after James Pollard the stage coach rides again. Rather than strictly sporting, Landseer's *Monarch of the Glen* seems a sentimental evocation of the freedom of the new game, at a lower level in the 1860s provides a nightmarish vision of men in black watching poker-faced a bull-terrier killing rats in a wooden enclosure.

As anyone connected with charities knows, they are running a hard time. Some of the owners every year have to fall out of the open garden scheme because of labour and other difficulties. But it is encouraging that more new garden owners come forward each year—indeed, at present, like a cross between a lettuce and a soft savoy cabbage with a cabbage flavour.

On the debit side in my garden was the new Fiskeby sofa bean. We raised plants in peat pots under glass and planted them out in early June, but the crop was negligible, we were not, as a family, particularly taken with the beans. Most people I have spoken to or heard from had a poor result with this bean. It may have been that the summer did not suit it.

The half-hardy annuals did remarkably well. The dwarf single dahlias from seed especially and also the new so-called penstemon flowered antirrhinum sold under various names such as *Pixie* and *Bright Butterflies*. I must say that being rather conservative in these matters I was not expecting to like these antirrhinums with open widely tubular flowers. But they are most attractive and I commend them to the tall Bright Butterflies mixture, which grows to about two and a half feet, or the dwarf *Pixie* hybrids, only about 8in to 12in high.

The dwarf bedding scarlet salvia, I admit, are not among my favourite flowers. They remind me of the almost obligatory French bedding schemes, and to me are rather vulgar. Every Frenchman seems to favour a bed in the front garden of scarlet salvia, with a large canna in the middle, and an edging of white alyssum. But there are obviously places where salvia are appropriate.

Early in the year many of us who are interested in the charters which have a considerable part of their income from private gardens kindly opened to the public were concerned about the effect the rising price of petrol would have on these garden visits. We hoped that so far from deterring people from visiting gardens, more people

## Chess A family affair

In the days when it did not matter whether petrol was dear or not in the days when Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* first delighted the public; in the days when my father came to this country; in short, in good Queen Victoria's golden reign there was a man of considerable means who had some interest in chess strategy. Every Saturday afternoon while consuming tea and crumpets at the Athenaeum he would play a game of chess with his favourite nephew.

But I confine myself to saying that I can show you the very chess set (a magnificent example of Staunton chess men) with which they played still in its place in that gracious drawing room on the first floor of the club.

The two players were about equal in strength. The uncle was a solid strategist who swore by the scientific principles of Siegbert Tarrasch. As one might have expected from the younger man, the nephew was a follower of Emanuel Lasker. He occasionally less quotations from *Common Sense in Chess*; but still, he was the only other member of the family who played chess so, having no direct descendant and intending to die a bachelor, like his father before him, he made a will bequeathing his entire fortune to the nephew.

The nephew, in his mind's eye, could see himself treating his nephew to tea and crumpets at the Athenaeum some time in the reign of Edward the Seventh. This was a curiously indirect family in which the chain of succession passed from nephew to nephew. The family tree was a series of knights' moves.

But one day, through an act of blind, predatory greed, he spoilt it all. Both uncle and nephew also became members of the Hampstead Chess Club, which was one of the leading clubs in the London Chess League. The nephew played on a high board the second team, while the uncle, as befitted his senior status, usually stood by as a spectator and specialized in giving advice. This practice occasionally got him into trouble with those who were ignorant of his wealth. I am well aware

that it is against the rules to give advice in these circumstances, but these rules are more honoured in the breach than the observance.

One evening the nephew was playing in an inter-club match Queen Victoria's golden reign there was a man of considerable means who had some interest in chess strategy. Every Saturday afternoon while consuming tea and crumpets at the Athenaeum he would play a game of chess with his favourite nephew.

The game, a lively brevity, went as follows. White: X Black: Y. Q Pawn Opening. 1 P-Q4 Kt-KB3 B-K15 P-B3 An excellent alternative is 2... P-Q4. 3 Kt-K5 and also good 2... P-Q4. 4 Kt-K5 Q-K8 Q-Q3 A logical capture, but one that costs a lot of time since the Queen must be brought back to the centre. 5 B-Q2 Threatening to win off-hand by 6. R-Kt1, Q-R6; 7. Kt-K5. 6 P-K5 P-Q3 7 P-K5 P-Q3 8 P-K5 P-Q3 9 P-K5 P-Q3 10 P-K5 P-Q3 11 P-K5 P-Q3 12 P-K5 P-Q3 13 P-K5 P-Q3 14 P-K5 P-Q3 15 P-K5 P-Q3 16 P-K5 P-Q3 17 P-K5 P-Q3 18 P-K5 P-Q3 19 P-K5 P-Q3 20 P-K5 P-Q3 21 P-K5 P-Q3 22 P-K5 P-Q3 23 P-K5 P-Q3 24 P-K5 P-Q3 25 P-K5 P-Q3 26 P-K5 P-Q3 27 P-K5 P-Q3 28 P-K5 P-Q3 29 P-K5 P-Q3 30 P-K5 P-Q3 31 P-K5 P-Q3 32 P-K5 P-Q3 33 P-K5 P-Q3 34 P-K5 P-Q3 35 P-K5 P-Q3 36 P-K5 P-Q3 37 P-K5 P-Q3 38 P-K5 P-Q3 39 P-K5 P-Q3 40 P-K5 P-Q3 41 P-K5 P-Q3 42 P-K5 P-Q3 43 P-K5 P-Q3 44 P-K5 P-Q3 45 P-K5 P-Q3 46 P-K5 P-Q3 47 P-K5 P-Q3 48 P-K5 P-Q3 49 P-K5 P-Q3 50 P-K5 P-Q3 51 P-K5 P-Q3 52 P-K5 P-Q3 53 P-K5 P-Q3 54 P-K5 P-Q3 55 P-K5 P-Q3 56 P-K5 P-Q3 57 P-K5 P-Q3 58 P-K5 P-Q3 59 P-K5 P-Q3 60 P-K5 P-Q3 61 P-K5 P-Q3 62 P-K5 P-Q3 63 P-K5 P-Q3 64 P-K5 P-Q3 65 P-K5 P-Q3 66 P-K5 P-Q3 67 P-K5 P-Q3 68 P-K5 P-Q3 69 P-K5 P-Q3 70 P-K5 P-Q3 71 P-K5 P-Q3 72 P-K5 P-Q3 73 P-K5 P-Q3 74 P-K5 P-Q3 75 P-K5 P-Q3 76 P-K5 P-Q3 77 P-K5 P-Q3 78 P-K5 P-Q3 79 P-K5 P-Q3 80 P-K5 P-Q3 81 P-K5 P-Q3 82 P-K5 P-Q3 83 P-K5 P-Q3 84 P-K5 P-Q3 85 P-K5 P-Q3 86 P-K5 P-Q3 87 P-K5 P-Q3 88 P-K5 P-Q3 89 P-K5 P-Q3 90 P-K5 P-Q3 91 P-K5 P-Q3 92 P-K5 P-Q3 93 P-K5 P-Q3 94 P-K5 P-Q3 95 P-K5 P-Q3 96 P-K5 P-Q3 97 P-K5 P-Q3 98 P-K5 P-Q3 99 P-K5 P-Q3 100 P-K5 P-Q3

Harry Golombek



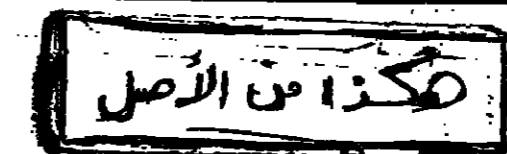
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Harry Golombek



The Chase Match by James Seymour 1702-1752, from the collection of Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon.

## CONCERTS

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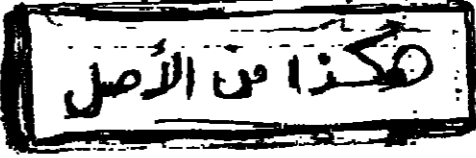
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Feb. 3 Jan. at 8 ALBERT ROSEN  
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KAGEL: Symphony 3 1st Brit. perf. SIKOJSKI: Harpophone 1st Brit. perf.  
Wed. 8 Jan. at 8 BERNARD KEEFFE, JOHN PRICE  
MURGAN: Concerto for Chamber Opn. J.W.A.T. Foundation 1st Brit. perf.  
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Continued from page 6

"You describe it perfectly", said Mr Peach. "Yes", said Pussy Owl modestly. "I have literary as well as musical talent. However, all this singing and flying to say nothing of having to correct your mistakes—has made me hungry. I think I'll go and have my lunch now."

That's just as well. I'm extremely busy at present. "We haven't decided yet", Mr Peach said in a warning tone, "whether to admit you to the school."

in the orchestra—playing the triangle. "Can you think of an opera with a good part for the triangle?" Pussy Owl asked in a chatty way.

"That word is neither Italian nor German." "No, of course not", said Pussy Owl. "It's Pussy-Owl, Italian and German. Of course I know how to pronounce a c in Italian when it's followed by an e or i."

He set off, walking with stumpy, clumping steps, up the centre aisle. "Come on, Mrs Frax; come on Puppelwitz", he said as he passed the row where they were sitting, and they fell in behind him.

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At a time when most of us are weighing up the 1975 prospects and wondering: "Where do we go from here?" it is nice to know that some people have the answer. Bali, and Hongkong, Cape Town and Acapulco, Curacao, Rio de Janeiro and Honolulu are just a few of the ports along the way.

he already completely booked up for 1975—or as near as makes little difference. "They'll be at the Boat Show, as usual, but it's hardly worth their while", I was told last week.

As for the "traditional" package holiday abroad, I fear the Court Line lesson has not been learned by the tour company manufacturers of this product. Certainly they seem to have finally seen the light as far as prices and profitability go.

Mr Peter Shore has promised that legislation will be introduced early in 1975 to protect holidaymakers and to compensate the operators of the Court Line collapse.

People should feel free to do as they wish with their disposable income—buy cars or clothes, give it to book-makers or endow cats' homes. Equally they should choose what holiday suits them and travel journalists should choose subjects that reflect all tastes—the merit of the subject, not its geographical location being the only criterion.

A considerable number (if booking reports are anything to go by) are already planning camping holidays and I have been specifically investigating the merits of a company called Canvas Holidays, which takes all the donkey work out of camping by supplying ready erected, fully equipped frame tents on selected sites. More about that in January.

It has been estimated, with authority, that for every two holidays sold, one will remain unsold. If this comes to pass, we shall pay—literally, because the ones we don't subscribe to—more than we should. It is not a matter of "consolidation".

Mr Reg Law of the Court Line Action Group, reckons that over 100,000 people are involved. His group has been pressing for 100 per cent compensation and legislation to protect future holidaymakers.

Writing to me (again, rather gloomily) from Edgbaston, a Mr Rogers suggested recently that holidays abroad were "unpatriotic" and that writers on the subject should encourage people to take their holidays in Britain in 1975.

John Carter

Looking beyond that particular plum of a trip and surveying the rest of the fruit on the travel trade's stall, there is plenty to make the mouth water, although a certain amount of blight has been attacking the crop, as we are likely to discover next spring.

Optimism, too, from Chadris, with an expanded series of Caribbean cruises between now and mid-April and over 140 cruises from European ports between March and October. Most of these are the "fly and cruise" formula, operating from Amsterdam, Cannes, Venice and Piraeus.

There are some fairly mouth-watering offers in the P & O programme, too, with Arcadia, Canberra and Oriana operating 23 cruises out of Southampton between April and December. "Traditional" trips these, which appeal, I know, to those of this type of holiday.

What applies to sherry refrigerator is that it is better to keep them standing on a bar shelf under a light in a warm room, and once the bottles are opened, their contents will become dreadfully unenjoyable in half an hour.

John Carter

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Collectors Drink To keep or not to keep, that is the question. Once, in July, a well-known writer asked what should be done with the opened but unfinished bottles of wines left over from Christmas.

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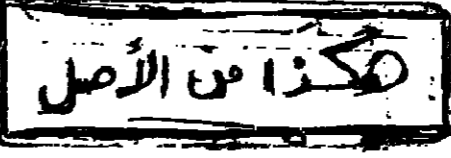
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### THE CHILTERN BECKON

It would be a relief for all concerned if Mr John Stonehouse were to apply at once for the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds. If he is still of a mind to start a new life in Australia, if he is permitted to do so, and if he is now capable of a coherent plan of action, he will vacate his seat. But those are big "ifs" in the context of this extraordinary story. It is conceivable that he will let the matter of the membership of the House of Commons lie, or that he will come back and try to reestablish his political career. The second of those alternatives is certainly consonant with his personality.

In case of that, it is possibly worth remembering that he does not hold his seat in Parliament by favour of the Leader of the House, or of the national executive committee of the Labour Party, or of his constituency chairman. He holds it by right of election in North Walsall. Nor, strictly speaking can he or any other MP resign his seat. He can only disqualify himself from occupying it. The painless way of doing that is by applying for the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds or the Manor of Northstead, nominal offices of profit under the Crown whose tenure automatically disqualifies

a man from sitting in the Commons. The painful way of doing it is for an MP to conduct himself as to be judged unfit by the House to be a member of it and to be expelled. Over the years the Commons has found various grounds sufficient for expulsion. None is the list necessarily closed. Conviction of a criminal offence other than treason does not automatically disqualify or lead to expulsion. Miss Bernadette Devlin, when member for Mid-Ulster, was convicted of riotous behaviour and sentenced to six months imprisonment. She was not expelled. Peter Baker, a one time MP for South Norfolk, was convicted of forgery and sentenced to seven years imprisonment in 1954. He was expelled. A member who is expelled is not disabled from standing for election again, though he may be again excluded—Wilkes and Bradlaugh.

### Is there, or is there not, a crisis?

From Mr A. R. E. Hore  
Sir, I wish someone would tell me whether or not we are all in a frightful mess. I am not sure that I mind any longer which way it is as long as I know because then I shall know what to do. According to the news media, many stockbrokers, many politicians (mainly from Opposition parties), a number of civil servants and a sprinkling of businessmen the situation is almost unbearably grisly. But according to my day to day experience nothing could be further from the truth.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Mr Hugh Saunders  
Sir, Many of us are concerned at the ineptitude of the Government in publishing the recent report on the economy. It is not only the indication of what the suggested increases really mean. Most of the people concerned are in very high tax brackets so that a salary increase of several thousand pounds would almost entirely be refunded to the Government, leaving the recipient better off by only a few pounds per week.

### The increases in top salaries

Either we are, as a nation, in grave and desperate situation, or we are not. If we are, and I am sure we are, then this is no time to argue over public money, and to go for "Top Peoples" salaries to let us, by all means, establish principles of justice and equity in salary scales and structures, but I am sure that we are also establishing the conditions under which the principles can be realized, or preserved.

### THE DESTRUCTION OF DARWIN

The devastation of Darwin does not rank among the world's largest disasters. The death roll is smaller and the physical damage less extensive than after many other natural disasters, such as the Skopje earthquake of 1963 or the Bangladesh floods of 1970. But numerical comparisons do not mean very much. The almost complete destruction of a town containing roughly as many people as Folkestone evokes a response that is not proportionate to figures on a numbered scale. Many people have died and a great many more have lost not only material possessions but the entire familiar pattern of their lives. No one can measure this loss, and no amount of physical restoration can wholly replace what has gone. It may not even be possible to rebuild the city on the same site, in which case nature will have achieved more than the massive bombing raids of 1942.

known faults in the earth's crust. It is therefore difficult to take special precautions against them, such as building to certain specifications. The best hope is a good forecasting system and reasonably solid buildings. But nothing that is realistic in terms of cost and other factors can provide complete protection from freak weather. Enormous damage was done on Britain's east coast in 1953, when 307 people lost their lives. Nine years later 343 people were killed by storms and floods in Hamburg. Scarcely any part of the globe is immune.

be made for abnormal weather. Even so, the disaster will not have helped Mr Whitlam, the Prime Minister. He has already been under criticism for making a long trip abroad at a time when his country is suffering from inflation and unemployment. The fact that the cyclone struck while he was absent will create unhappiness if irrational associations in people's minds.

### Editors and a closed shop

From the Editor of The Guardian  
Sir, Before the demon of censorship appears in a puff of smoke over Ebbw Vale, could we tidy up one or two points? The national newspaper editors did not tell the Secretary of State for Employment last week that there could be talks with the NUJ and others. They told us that the success of any such talks was likely to be jeopardized if he refused to give parliamentary backing to freedom of communication. Nor did they say, as his letter (December 24) implies, that they wanted something done to help the NUJ and others. The contrary, they wanted exemption for newspapers and broadcasting from the provision in his Bill by which men and women may be dismissed without compensation if they refuse to join a specified trade union closed shop situation.

### Mergers Act, today's Labour Government

ought to make similar provision in its Trade Union Bill. If monopoly ownership had to be prevented, so must control by a single editorial trade union be avoided. That would still be true even if the NUJ and its policy makers were the fairy godmothers in whom Mr Foot wants us to believe.

### From the Principal of Sheffield Polytechnic

Sir, If the Houghton committee has indeed proposed a basis of parity between polytechnic and university teachers, and that parity is implemented, then a great injustice of the educational world will have been removed. Even so, I can find no pleasure in the justice which will increase my own salary by 40 per cent.

### LAY-OFFS IN THE MOTOR INDUSTRY

It looks increasingly as if the New Year will usher in programmes of severe redundancies in the motor-car industry. Indeed, the process would probably already be further advanced but for the fact that the managements concerned preferred not to blight the holiday period for their employees. The most important single move has been from Chrysler, the American subsidiary, which has already announced that it is putting 5,000 of its Scottish workers on to a three-day week for the last three weeks of January as part of its plans to reduce production. Unless there is, for some quite unexpected reason, a marked improvement in car sales, short-time working will inevitably lead to actual redundancies. And other car manufacturers will be forced to take the same action.

a whole. To the extent that the management of Chrysler UK is closely supervised by its parent company in the United States, the subsidiary in this country may be somewhat quicker than a purely domestic company in responding to the changed situation in the industry. It would, however, be wrong to suggest that American masters are forcing a British company to initiate unnecessarily stringent economy measures. The fact is that no car manufacturer can continue to employ labour and produce cars if it is not achieving the necessary sales. As the domestic and international recession deepens, the levels of employment can only fall.

aware as anyone of the political and other pressures that would build up if it became clear that the million mark was soon to be reached and then surpassed. Yet, in the interests of economic stabilization, the Chancellor dare not embark on any general reflation of the economy until it is clear that the general level of wage settlements is down to an acceptable level.

### IDEAL TO CLOSE HOSPITALS

From Dr L. R. Twentymann and others  
Sir, May we refer to the recent letter concerning the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital and draw your attention to the fact that in addition to this hospital there are others fulfilling a national function which are under threat.

### Ownership of Rockall

From Mr Peter Clarke  
Sir, The news that the Danish Government disputes the ownership of Rockall merits some attention. The willingness of the Government to placate the other nations of the EEC is one thing, but we would not wish to see the island in Danish hands.

### The price of sugar

From Mr John Southgate  
Sir, In all the press coverage of the current sugar negotiations between the developing countries, the EEC and the British Government I have seen no adequate account of the effect of the proposals on the developing countries. I retired in the autumn of 1972 as Executive Director of the Commonwealth Sugar Exporters' Association and have had no part at all in the present negotiations, but the following are the facts, as I understand them.

### Break before university

From Sir Peter Venables  
Sir, In his letter (December 5) Sir John Masterman thinks it not to be regretted that many of the students promised places at Monash University did not take them up after the break. Before the practice of the break has a chance to become widespread at British universities with similar results, it would be as well to consider some aspects which have been overlooked or even deliberately ignored.

versity may extend to several years, but is the student then to return on the same level as he would have had in the first place? Nothing could more certainly ensure that still fewer would return to study. Expediency would then of course be quietly contained within limits assumed to be justifiable.

been once, but now it no longer suffices to prepare students for their own personal lives and work—the casualties and the short-falls are too severe in terms of human happiness and effectiveness and thus negatively in society at large. What is required is interrelated experience and education, reflected on and assimilated. The Vice-Chancellor of Brunel University touched on this central issue in his excellent letter (December 2), not least I suspect because of his experience in industry and his strong commitment to sand-wich courses.

### Cathedral collapses

From Professor J. Heyman  
Sir, Mr P. Silby in his letter today (December 16) draws attention to the large number of collapses which occurred in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A common feature of almost all the examples cited by Mr Silby is that collapse occurred within a generation of the completion of the work.

### Public lending right

From Mr David Benedictus  
Sir, Writers don't want a levy on borrowings from the public libraries. A free library service is as essential as free swimming baths, free street lights, and all the rest. And to suggest as Messrs Hurd and Lawson (December 20), that the taxpayer should not subsidize this service, but that those who use the libraries should, is as logical as proposing that children should pay for schooling, criminals for jails, and the unemployed for unemployment benefits.

### The British Library

From Professor T. A. Birrell  
Sir, All overseas pilgrims to the British Library will read with amazement and dismay of the latest plan for its ultimate destination. So the Old Royal Library of the Kings of England, the King's Library, Domesday Book, Magna Carta, Beowulf and Shakespeare's First Folio are to be housed on a disused railway goods yard at Euston.

at least as long as the world price is significantly higher than the minimum price; (c) that £200 is inadequate in present circumstances, but it must be added that in the light of the long-term arrangement they are not seeking anything like the total world price. There are two reasons for this stand. First, the sale at £200 per ton in 1975 compared with the present world price would wipe out in one year all the benefits they have received from the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement over 21 years. Second, if the world price comes down (to below £200 per ton in 1975) and to below the minimum guaranteed price thereafter, the measure of the over-payment made by Britain and the Community would be comparatively small and calculable. But if the world price stays high or goes higher, the developing countries could be seen to have thrown away hundreds of millions of pounds a year. This is politically and economically unacceptable to countries suffering from rampant imported inflation and chronic shortage of foreign exchange. Therefore, there must be some benefit to them from the world price while this is higher than the minimum guaranteed price. If this is not arranged, the sugar cannot be forthcoming. Yours faithfully, JOHN SOUTHGATE, 4a Douglas House, Malpas Vale SW2, December 20.











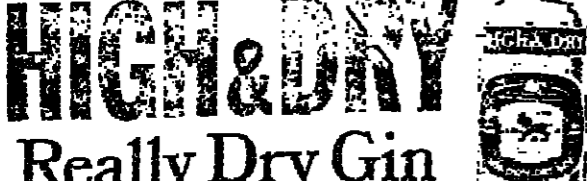








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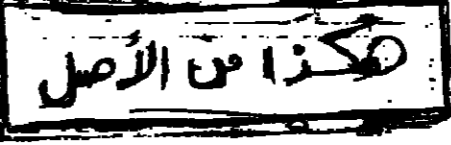
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THE TIMES BUSINESS NEWS



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Gold price rises to record \$195 1/2 ahead of private American buying

By Tim Congdon
Gold rose to record levels in the London bullion market yesterday. It closed at \$195 1/2, up \$3 from its last quote on Christmas eve.
Although conditions were described by dealers as tight, there was still a surprising amount of business in view of the Christmas holiday period.

Kuwait reassures UK on oil and investment

Kuwait, Dec 27.—Mr Abdul Fattah al-Ahqi, Oil Minister, has announced that Kuwait will never reduce oil production to the point it hurts the United States or Britain. These two countries "are the best and most secure places for Kuwaiti investments", he said.

Texaco reports 'significant' North Sea find

"A significant discovery" in United Kingdom waters approximately 116-miles north-east of Aberdeen, was announced yesterday by Texaco in block 15/16. A test well flowed at a rate of 7,246 barrels a day, a spokesman said.

How the markets moved

Table with columns for Rises and Falls, listing various stocks and their prices.

On other pages

Leading US economic indicators in 1.5pc drop

Washington, Dec 27.—America's composite index of leading economic indicators declined by 1.5 per cent in November to 166.9 per cent of the 1967 average, the Commerce Department announced today. It was the fourth consecutive monthly decline in the index.

More ships ordered by Arabs

By Peter Hill
Leading Arab shipping companies in the Middle East are showing increasing interest in acquiring both tanker and dry cargo tonnage. Yesterday Hyundai Shipbuilding and Heavy Industries, of South Korea, said it had received orders valued at \$80m (£24.7m) from Kuwait Shipping Co for construction of five general cargo ships, each of 23,200 tons deadweight.

Retailers fear slump after record seasonal sales

By David Young
Retail groups are preparing for a marked fall in sales after their record Christmas and an unexpectedly buoyant start to the winter sales.

Table with columns for Bank Base Rates Table and Equities were inactive with business at low level.

Midland workers press Chrysler for urgent discussions on threat of three-day working

By Clifford Webb
Shop stewards at Chrysler's Midland car plants are to press for an urgent meeting with the management after reports from Scotland suggesting that all the group's car factories would be put on a three-day week next month. This could mean short-time working for 15,000 out of a total labour force of 28,000.

Grim outlook for car component suppliers

By R. W. Shakespeare
With many thousands of workers in the motor and component industries taking extended holidays over the Christmas and New Year period, most plants were at a standstill yesterday. Some will remain halted until well into January.

Building societies merger 'cannot now go through'

A proposed merger of the Bourneouth & Christchurch Building Society with the larger Portman Building Society cannot now go through, it was claimed today by Mr Jim Rowland-Jones, a shareholder with the small society.

Travel bond demands hit small agents

By Patricia Tisdall
Several small tour operating firms are expected to drop out of the travel business because they cannot meet the Civil Aviation Authority's tougher bonding requirements designed to protect customers in the event of financial failure.

Guarded optimism by air transport head

From Alan McGregor, Geneva, Dec 27
In his year-end review of the state of the air transport industry, Mr Klaus Hammer, director general of the International Air Transport Association, says the very fact that companies are managing to weather the global economic storm without a complete collapse shows their inherent resilience.

Japan Air Lines retaining Concorde option for year

By Arthur Reed, Air Correspondent
Japan Air Lines has decided to retain its option to buy the Concorde supersonic airliner for at least a further year.

Fisons' chief heads CBI overseas committee

Mr George Burton, chairman of Fisons, has been appointed chairman of the Confederation of British Industry's enlarged overseas committee, which was formed by merging the former overseas and overseas investment committees. Sir David Ezra, chairman of the National Coal Board, and Sir James Barker, chairman of Unigate are to be deputy chairmen.

Occidental names Saudi buyer of \$9m stake

Occidental Petroleum Corporation has confirmed that Mr Ghazi Esharad, an Arab businessman, had purchased about one million Occidental common shares. The deal was disclosed earlier this month, but the buyer was not named.

Mr Marsh says BR could save £54m

By Roger Violeyve
British Rail could make savings of between £50m and £60m on the cost of providing new locomotives and rolling stock if it was allowed to purchase a long-term leasing policy, according to Mr Richard Marsh, the chairman of British Railways Board.

Interest rates fall unlikely

Short-term interest rates in London are not expected to decline in the near future, according to the latest Williamsons Credit Monthly Review. Britain seems, therefore, to be moving against the trend of falling interest rates abroad.

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The Times Awards for the best advertisement of a company's results to appear in 1974

The closing date (31st December) for the 1974 Award Scheme is now very close and we would like to remind those companies wishing to take part in the competition that they must submit their entries by 6th January at the latest.



Walking shop

# Where the family's money is going

In a reaction of the average fish householder to the economic situation...

In recent years, the trend has been towards an increasing proportion of family outgoings being spent on the less basic necessities...

The largest item in the family budget has traditionally been food, which, according to Government statistics, comprises just over a quarter of the average household's weekly expenditure...

Next to meat the largest item on the family food bill is dairy products, such as eggs, milk, butter and cheese...

Families have found their methods of coping with sharp increases which have sent food prices to almost 20 per cent above last year's levels...

This is particularly noticeable, as any butcher will testify, with meat. When beef prices exceed what is considered to be a reasonable level, consumers move to mutton, or to chicken.

PERCENTAGE OF WEEKLY EXPENDITURE		Housing*	Fuel, light & power	Food	Drink	Clothes & shoes	Durable household goods	Transport	Tobacco	Services
1964-66	£21.01	11.42	6.28	28.27	4.09	9.38	6.43	11.7	5.66	9.38
1971-73	£35.14	13.00	5.78	25.01	4.70	8.94	7.29	13.83	3.93	9.85

\*excluding mortgages: see text  
Source: Family Expenditure Survey

The effectiveness of such economies is noticeably reflected in the statistics for the first quarter of this year when incomes were pinched by reductions in overtime payments and by three-day working...

Cheese, where consumption had dropped to 3.54oz per person per week in the first quarter of the year, rose to 3.85oz in the second quarter after the introduction of the subsidy...

has disrupted supply calculated by rapid cost increases. The full extent of this disruption will not be known for some time. Nevertheless, the long-term trend for food purchases to give way to other items as a proportion of family expenditure seems likely to continue...

Immediately hit by rises in petrol and purchase price. At the same time many one-car households, they say, are turning to smaller, more economical cars when replacing their existing vehicles...

of weekly expenditure, the situation this year has largely been one of settling down after the dramatic movements of the previous two years when both mortgage interest rates and house prices rocketed...

Patricia Tisdall

# Hanson Trust pledges 'vigorous' defence on claim by United Artists

In its first reaction to news that United Artists Theatre Circuit wishes the second largest cinema chain in the United States is going to court to block what it sees as an attempt to gain control of the company by Hanson Trust...

Denain's bid for Firminy suspended after EEC ruling. Paris, Dec 27. The controversial Denain Nord-est Longwy bid for Marine-Firminy shares has been suspended...

# Ingersoll-Rand sees fresh peak

The American Ingersoll-Rand group expects sales, profits and earnings per share in 1974 to exceed the previous records established in 1973 when net earnings rose from \$70.8m to \$82.1m...

# Selling move by Samuel Properties

Stating that at the present time major objective is to reduce short-term borrowings to a minimum level, Viscount Bearsted, chairman of Samuel Properties, adds that as a result the group has decided to sell some of its low-yielding investment and trading properties...

# Briefly

- HAWKINS DEVS** Six months' turnover £4.8m (£3.02m) but pre-tax loss £19,000 (£13,000 profit). Dividend passed, last paid in 1963. Proposals for sale of northern company expected "very shortly".
- ML ALKAN** Profit after tax £107,000 (£51,000) for year to September 30. Earnings 5.52p (1.54p) with total dividend held at 2.05p net.
- JAMES HARRISON** Including sale of development land pre-tax profit £293,000 (£98,000) in half to June 30. Earnings 2.33p (1.01p) a share. No interim to conserve cash, but total forecast 2.15p (1.91p), maximum allowed.
- FORMINSTER** Interim taxable profits £292,000 (£217,000) with earnings 6.36p (5.39p) and dividend 2.34p (1.75p).
- SOBRANIE** Interim taxable profit £64,000 (£104,000). Earnings excluding extraordinary item 0.86p (1.74p) a share. Laundry division hit by higher wages and fuel costs and tobacco business by higher interest.
- CENTREWAY SECURITIES** In six months to September 30 taxable profits £17,000 (£23,000). Board forecasts pre-tax for full year much higher than previous year's £20,000.
- BRECHWOOD CONSTRUCTION** In half to September 30 pre-tax £175,000 (£161,000) from turnover £1.8m (£1.6m).
- AILSA INV TRUST** Gross income for half year, £232,000 (£213,000). Pre-tax revenue, £199,000 (£183,500). Net asset value a share, 52p (116.4p). Dividend up from 2p to 2.1p gross.
- STROUD RILEY DRUMMOND** Turnover for half year, £4.4m (£3m). Taxable profit £199,000 (£219,000). Earnings a share, 2.76p (3.15p). Interim is up from 1.25p to 1.3p.
- GEORGE SALTER** Profit for first six months, £30,000 (£100,000) after tax, on turnover of £4.3m (£3.8m). Earnings a share are 36.2p (39.9p).
- TRANS-OCEANIC TEST** For year to October 31 taxable revenue £624,000 (£526,000). Earnings 3.64p (3.12p) a share with net asset value pre-conversion 89p (177p).
- BRIT CINE THEATRES** Turnover for six months, £510,000 (£503,000), and taxable profits, £76,000 (£59,000).
- DWA PLANTATIONS** Turnover for nine months, £248,500 (£222,000) for year. Pre-tax profits, £165,000 (£94,500).
- ARTHUR LEE & SONS** Final dividend for year to September 30, reduced from 1.05p to 1.024p at Treasury request.
- GEORGE STURUA** Nominee Assurance (Hildes) has bought 2.7m shares (64 per cent) in company at agreed price of 4.5p a share from Realgrove. Offer is unconditional.
- RADIANT METAL** Interim profit £61,000 (£57,000) pre-tax from turnover of £208,000 (£153,000).
- RELANCO GROUP** Inbalco subsidiary has acquired 89 per cent of Fuel Economy Consultants, London, for undisclosed sum.
- CENTRAL & SHERRWOOD TEST** Investment banking subsidiary, Sherrwood Trust, has acquired 328,815 shares (45.5 per cent) of M. H. Marinc, making total holding 91.25 per cent. Offer for remaining shares proposed.

Tea promotion body may be set up. A central body for the promotion of tea on a world wide basis was the main conclusion of the symposium on International Tea Market Expansion held in London which finished recently...

# Are you covered overseas?

Even though many people now travel abroad extensively, for business and pleasure, many insurance policies restrict the cover to Britain and only their limited cover elsewhere...

Usually, the most convenient arrangement is for personal liability insurance to be included with a householders' policy. It may be "free" or not cost more than about 50p.

February. More trouble for insurance subsidiaries. After the temporary suspension of the J. H. Vasseur share price, it is announced that its life assurance subsidiary faced with income bond surrenders...

March. Within three weeks of the snap election, the Chancellor, the Government refuses to identify the 49 insurance companies which have been ordered to place their assets under trustees. Nonetheless, it

Investor's week. How much are shareholders' perks worth? The "perks" which their stake could command begin in a few cases to make economic sense. There are still shareholders who regularly take lengthy train journeys to London to attend their companies' annual general meetings...

John Drummond. The tables showing unit trust performance normally published on this page have been held over.

# A year of setbacks, surprises and change

The year began in gloom. There was still the after-taste of the first, as it turned out to be, casualties in the secondary banking area...

January. Cornhill Consolidated, the investment bank, runs into trouble and its Basilion Insurance subsidiary is ordered to restrict its business and is subsequently sold...

February. More trouble for insurance subsidiaries. After the temporary suspension of the J. H. Vasseur share price, it is announced that its life assurance subsidiary faced with income bond surrenders...

March. Within three weeks of the snap election, the Chancellor, the Government refuses to identify the 49 insurance companies which have been ordered to place their assets under trustees. Nonetheless, it

pendent banking force. The number of banks has to be reduced from 72 to 15 and the first merger follows within weeks. Again, after the Page Report, the Government announces that it intends to introduce two modest, index-linked schemes in early 1975...

July. The storm breaks with announcement that Nation Life is to go into liquidation. But at this stage there are hopes that the new system under the Insurance Companies Amendment Act, 1973, will enable some form of rescue operation to be mounted.

August. The old adage about going away in August seems to be singularly irrelevant at the moment. Everything is happening. There is a Green Paper on a wealth tax, starting at £100,000 and a White Paper on the capital transfer tax—a lifetime tax to replace estate duty...

September. Mrs. Castle introduces her White Paper Better Pensions with an earnings-related second-tier pension in addition to the basic state pension. There is complete equality for women in the second tier, but private pension plans are worried about having to produce an inflation-proof element to their pensions if they contract out of the state scheme.

October. Jessel Securities runs into difficulties. Its London Indemnity and General Insurance needs that extra 16m of cash to meet income bond surrenders and stops writing business. A rescue operation is mounted for LIG by 30 life offices, but rumours now start about Welfare Insurance, which also has income bond problems. This time it is London and Man-

chester Insurance which steps into the breach. The rate of insurance company failures, or near failures, prompts the Government into announcing a compulsory rescue fund for the insurance industry. The cost is to be no more than 1 per cent of annual premium income...

November. At long last there is news for Nation Life policyholders, but it is in no way encouraging. It appears that several matters have to be resolved by the courts before any settlement is likely and the whole affair could take years. A sly rescue consortium is still waiting in the wings, however.

December. Jessel Securities sells another subsidiary, Life and Equity Assurance, to Cannon Assurance for an undisclosed sum. Scottish Life axes its terminal bonuses as from the beginning of 1975 and Scottish Widows savagely reduces its surrender values.

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FINANCIAL NEWS AND MARKET REPORTS

Competition and lower margins cause slump at Bell & Sime

The latest timber group to record a decline in profits is Bell & Sime, the Dundee-based company. Sales for the first half are down from £1.76m to £1.67m, while taxable profits have slumped from £162,000 to £52,000.

Europe will be drawn together under a single control and constitute a separate company known as BOC Ltd.

After the change British Oxygen Company Ltd is the holding company of BOC Ltd and of all trading companies in the United Kingdom and Europe as well as of those in other overseas territories.

Edward Wood offer for D. F. Lyons. Writing as secretary to D. F. Lyons, the Leeds-based investment banker from which he recently resigned as a director, Mr D. F. Lyons tells shareholders that the company "has been damaged irreparably."

The Lyons board is strongly recommending the offer as the only way of resolving the unsatisfactory minority position.

Nova over the worst. Reporting a modest £4,000 increase in pre-tax profits to £53,000 over the six months to September 30, Nova (Jersey) Knit says conditions in the double jersey industry continue to be difficult.

The Lyons board is strongly recommending the offer as the only way of resolving the unsatisfactory minority position.

The present figures take no account of terminal losses which will follow the closure of the Luton factory.

BOC Re-shapes. Under an internal reorganisation the majority of British Oxygen's activities in the United Kingdom and Continental

Warning by Loraine Gold Mines. A warning comes from Mr W. F. Thomas, chairman of Loraine Gold Mines, in his 1973-4 annual report. The mine is unning at only 80 per cent of he underground black complex needed and better terms of work are unlikely to show immediate results in a better supply of labour.

Prudential now owns 17 pc of Keyser Ullmann. Prudential Assurance Co said it now beneficially owns 8,735 ordinary shares of Keyser Ullmann Holdings, representing 7.1 per cent of the issued share capital.

Tarmac secures \$17.5m medium-term loan. A syndicate of four banks from three countries has agreed to lend Tarmac Limited \$17.5m on a seven-year facility.

Bank Base Rates. Barclays Bank... 12%, BANC... 13%, Hill Samuel... 12 1/2%, C. Hoare & Co... 12%, Lloyds Bank... 12%, Midland Bank... 12%, Nat Westminster... 12%, Shentley Trust... 12%, 20th Cent Bank... 12%, Williams & Glyn's... 12%.

Silver slips after bright start. New York, Dec 26. Silver prices fell after a bright start on the day but later gave way to a sharp decline.

Foreign exchange - starting spot rates. The pound is down from \$2.2825 to \$2.2775.

Canada's prices. Canadian prices for various commodities are listed, including wheat and flour.

Latest dividends. All dividends in new pence or appropriate currencies. Company names and dividend details are provided.

Authorized Units, Insurance & Offshore Funds. A list of various financial products and their details.

Burmah deal with BASF on 13pc stake in Albatros

A message from Kassel gives news that the BASF AG subsidiary, the Albatros, has bought the 13 per cent holding of Burmah Oil Co in Albatros NV, of Antwerp, for an undisclosed sum.

Wintershall said it now holds a 40 per cent share in the Albatros 75m franc capital. Meanwhile, it is also announced that Burmah retains the right to refine crude oil at Albatros, which has a refinery with a capacity of 1 million tonnes annual capacity.

Wilson Bros. Greengrocers' group Wilson Brothers show a slight advance in taxable profits from £409,000 to £412,000 for the half to September 29.

A. B. Engineering. After-effects of the industrial disturbance experienced last winter have depressed the results of Associated British Engineering.

Troydale Industries. Turnover at Troydale Industries is down from £5.56m to £5.62m, although the board says that the years are not directly comparable.

Guthrie Corp. In order to bring the interim and final payments into line, the Guthrie Corporation is increasing its interim dividend from 6p to 9p.

Wall Street. New York, Dec 27. Wall Street stock prices were slightly lower in the closing session.

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Stock markets Featureless day for equities

The stock market's mood was quiescent rather than listless yesterday with the level of activity probably the lowest since the Second World War.

Although opening marginally easier at first, the industrial sector managed to close slightly ahead on balance.

Trading news brought a 4 1/2p fall to Bell & Sime at 50 1/2, while Brigay slipped 1 1/2p to 21 1/2.

Trading in gilts was at normal levels and most dealers left ahead on balance.

Latest dividends. All dividends in new pence or appropriate currencies.

Authorized Units, Insurance & Offshore Funds. A list of various financial products and their details.

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Foreign Exchange Big technical rise for the pound

The foreign exchange markets yesterday, but its rise was attributed to purely technical factors. The United States November trade deficit of \$1.13m depressed the currency throughout Europe and sterling participated in a general advance.

The pound climbed to \$2.2420 from Christmas eve's \$2.2385, up 35 points on the day.

Bank 'mops up' surplus credit. With most institutions operating reduced staffs conditions were extremely quiet in the London money markets yesterday.

Money Market Rates. Bank of England Minimum Lending Rate 12 1/2%.

Forward Levels. New York: 1 month forward 1.25% premium.

Recent Issues. A list of newly issued securities and their details.

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Spot Position of Sterling

New York: 1 month forward 1.25% premium. London: 1 month forward 1.25% premium.

Forward Levels. New York: 1 month forward 1.25% premium.

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Money Market Rates

Bank of England Minimum Lending Rate 12 1/2%. Treasury Bills: 3 months 11 1/4%.

Forward Levels. New York: 1 month forward 1.25% premium.

Recent Issues. A list of newly issued securities and their details.

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Insurance Bonds and Funds

Abney Life Assurance Ltd. Atlantic Assurance Co. British American Assurance Co.

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PLEASE CHECK YOUR AD. We make every effort to avoid errors in our advertisements. Back copies are available for sale at a special price. If you have any queries, please contact our office.

BIRTHS
On December 24th, at Queen Charlotte Hospital, a daughter (Nicola) to Mr and Mrs John G. Gifford.

MARRIAGES
On December 27th, at St. George's Church, London, the marriage of Miss Jane Elizabeth Thompson to Mr. Robert James Smith.

DEATHS
ALEXANDER, EDWARD. Passed away peacefully at his home, 12, St. George's Road, London, on December 27th, 1974, aged 82.

The Times Crossword Puzzle No 13,878

Crossword puzzle grid with clues: 1. Live a chap time to become forceful in speech (8). 2. Biblical maid-of-all-work (6). 3. Father gets back nothing that's material (8). 4. They're close enough, but not to touch (8). 5. Where Cook might "go the whole hog" (8). 6. No entrance fee for this trip? (6). 7. New ones after cabinet reshuffles? (5). 8. One may be inclined to defer making it (9). 9. It grows on you, old man! (5). 10. Does daily work in chambers, without honour (5). 11. Destructive sort of mortar (6). 12. A drink about five—time for another? (8). 13. Bird seen to alight by a perch (8). 14. One with an eye to business at the dressmaker's (6). 15. They're useless if threadbare (6). 16. Pre-radio loud-speakers (8). 17. Cuts in various uniform items (6). 18. Do they ring round the Coast of England? (10, 5). 19. Mississippi flower. Gaylord's bride (8). 20. The cause of a twist in roots (7). 21. Take things over, like the revision of Genesis (8). 22. In the garden, Alison is told not to get on with the spade-work (7). 23. The tale of a woman, like the revision of Genesis (8). 24. In the garden, Alison is told not to get on with the spade-work (7). 25. Natural description of a vector (9). 26. Just the people to glitzy things up? (3-5). 27. English queen, the One Lear confounded (7). 28. This soldier is not necessarily a cad (7). 29. A scene of action between the trees (6). 30. Solution of Puzzle No 13,877

DEATHS

MURPHY, JOHN. Passed away peacefully at his home, 12, St. George's Road, London, on December 27th, 1974, aged 82.

IN MEMORIAM
HODGSON, FRANCIS EDWARD. Passed away peacefully at his home, 12, St. George's Road, London, on December 27th, 1974, aged 82.

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS
BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION. Funeral service for the late Mr. John Smith, held at the British Heart Foundation, London, on December 27th, 1974.

RESEARCH TO FIND THE CURE
Are you a diabetic? Do you know someone who is? Research is being carried out to find a cure for diabetes.

BRITISH DIABETIC ASSOCIATION
The British Diabetic Association is a voluntary organization devoted to the relief and education of diabetics.

DAVE FLORA ROSSON asks: Did you see the BBC appeal in aid of the Children's Day, on Friday, 27th December? The appeal was for the Children's Day Appeal.

JOIN the Middle Class Association. Write for details to John Goss, 12, St. George's Road, London.

PERSONAL COLUMNS

ANNOUNCEMENTS
HOLIDAYS IN BRITAIN LET THE TIMES BE YOUR GUIDE.

MANCHESTER OFFICE 061 834 1234

SOUTHAMPTON ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE

CANCER RESEARCH
Your support of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's urgent appeal for funds is most appreciated.

UK HOLIDAYS
SCOTLAND & LAKE DISTRICT

MEMORIAL SERVICES
A memorial service for the late Mr. John Smith, held at the British Heart Foundation.

IN MEMORIAM
HODGSON, FRANCIS EDWARD.

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS
BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION.

RESEARCH TO FIND THE CURE
Are you a diabetic? Do you know someone who is?

BRITISH DIABETIC ASSOCIATION

DAVE FLORA ROSSON asks: Did you see the BBC appeal in aid of the Children's Day?

JOIN the Middle Class Association.

HOLIDAYS AND VILLAS

ITALY - TOP TO TOE
Almost half a century ago, Italy was a land of mystery and excitement.

WORLD EXPEDITIONARY ASSOCIATION
48 Kensington Road, London, S.W.5.

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Low cost reliable air services to Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

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DEAR MUM. Great news for you! The latest in fashion and beauty.

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SKIERS. The snow is now open for skiing in the Alps.

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CARPETS EX-HIBITION (20-83p per sq. yd.)

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HEADLEY HANTS BORDON. Tel: 01-275 7237.

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RESISTA CARPETS LTD
London's leading specialists in carpet, wall-to-wall and cords.

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A wide range of superior flats and houses for sale or rent.

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A wide range of services for the Putney area.

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A wide range of Stage Range cars for sale or rent.

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